

THE  
MONTH

NOVEMBER 1953

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**DOMESTIC RELATIONS  
IN SOVIET LAW**

D. P. O'CONNELL

**A PROTESTANT 'SUMMA THEOLOGICA'**

M. C. D'ARCY

**THE CONCERN OF GRAHAM GREENE**

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# DOMESTIC RELATIONS IN SOVIET LAW

By  
D. P. O'CONNELL

DURING RECENT YEARS there has been a tendency to regard the changes in the Soviet law of marriage and divorce as an admission of the failure of Marxist social doctrine. One must, however, view those changes with some caution; they are changes of form rather more than of substance. The basic postulates of the Marxist doctrine of the family as a social phenomenon remain unaltered, and there has been no decisive shift in emphasis in the Civil Law which they condition. It must be realized that Soviet legal theory is still struggling to reconcile social stability with the conception of the Soviet in its transitional phase from capitalism to collectivism. Russian law is, in consequence, in almost every aspect in a state of flux and characterized by experimentation. In Lenin's own words the present state of the dictatorship of the proletariat signifies a régime "not bound by fixed legal norms." If the outward forms of bourgeois legal institutions such as marriage and the family have in recent years tended to become more consolidated, that may imply nothing more to Soviet theorists than a temporary and entirely utilitarian adjustment of the new social mechanism to the traditional Civil Law categories. It does not necessarily indicate a fundamental alteration in the Marxist conception of the husband and wife and parent and child relationship. Engels's thesis that in the classless society of the future the economic basis, and hence the formal institution, of marriage would dissolve and be replaced by true love and affection and a decline of prostitution, would still seem as intrinsic an hypothesis in dogmatic Marxism as the conception of the withering away of the state. Just, however, as the latter is being proved more and more an illusion, so has Engels's naïve conception of the family been unrealized. While hesitating,

therefore, to ascribe too much significance to the contemporary development in the Soviet law of marriage, one may legitimately discover in it proof that concessions must be made to the natural law if only in the interests of State expediency.

The Czarist Civil Code of Marriage was largely of canonical origin. It required for the validity of a marriage between Christians a religious ceremony appropriate to the denomination of the parties. The only exception was a marriage between sectarians of the Orthodox Church known as the Old Believers, which had to be registered by the police. The form and validity of the marriage of non-Christians was regulated by the laws or customs of the religion or society to which the parties belonged. Marriages of Jews were required to be in the form prescribed by the Talmud. The relevant religious law likewise determined the capacity of the parties to marry. Orthodox believers over eighty, for example, were incapacitated from marrying by a synodal decree of 1744 which asserted that "marriage is established by God for the increase of the human race, which is completely hopeless to expect from anyone eighty years old." Divorce was likewise a matter of ecclesiastical or customary law. The Russian Eastern Christian Church permitted divorce on the grounds of adultery, impotency, conviction for penal offences with deprivation of civil rights, absence without indication of whereabouts by one spouse for five years, and the decision of the spouses to enter the religious life. The divorce decrees of the Orthodox ecclesiastical tribunals, and those of the Protestant tribunals, were recognized by the imperial law. There was no divorce between Catholics, and questions of nullity and separation involving Catholics were reserved for the appropriate ecclesiastical processes.

The Revolutionaries displayed characteristic haste in abolishing all institutions of status, and repudiating all natural relationships of superior and inferior. Marriage in their eyes was exclusively a matter of contract, an association based on consensus, and in no sense organic. Lenin proclaimed that "it is impossible to be a democrat and a socialist without immediately demanding complete freedom of divorce." In the first enthusiasm of the Revolution Bukharin stigmatized the family as "a formidable stronghold of the turpitutes of the old régime." Alexandra Kollontai asserted that "the family is ceasing to be a necessity both for its members and the State." In 1927 Professor Branden-

burgsky, who as a legal theorist enjoyed a privileged position in the Soviet hierarchy, asserted that "the family creating a series of rights and duties between spouses, parents and children, will certainly disappear in the course of time and be replaced by government organization of public education and social security." Legislation attempted to give formal recognition to this doctrine. Two decrees of 19 and 20 December, 1917, consolidated in the Code of 1918, abolished the old ecclesiastical laws and jurisdictions, and substituted for them a new law of civil marriage and divorce. Only civil marriage was recognized. It could be contracted by registration and dissolved by mutual consent. The practice arose of divorce by postcard addressed to the registrar's office. In the absence of mutual consent the divorce procedure was based on the petition of one party. No grounds other than consent or incompatibility were required. The only concession made to the natural law in this legislation was in the rules relating to capacity. Males of eighteen and females of sixteen years of age alone could contract marriage, and marriages between ascendants and descendants, brothers and sisters were proscribed. The more doctrinaire elements in the Soviet remained dissatisfied with the survival of even these vestiges of the traditional institution of marriage, and after 1918 the general trend of legislation was in the direction of the complete elimination of the concept of marriage from the law. The 1926 Code of Marriage Laws represents the ultimate formulation of the doctrinaire view. It was no longer necessary for parties to register in order to marry. Their *de facto* cohabitation, together with circumstantial evidence of the relative permanence of the liaison, alone sufficed. All judicial procedure for divorce was abolished. The bond between the parties could be severed unilaterally and without stating reasons; when the consensus of one party was withdrawn the basis of the marriage disappeared. A common surname might be employed as the parties pleased. If one spouse changed his or her abode there was no obligation on the part of the other to follow. Neither spouse enjoyed any evidentiary privilege in litigation involving the other. It followed logically from this view of marriage that not the formal institution but mere fact created the relationship of parent and child, and all distinction of legitimacy was abolished. In the new millennium, which in the early 1920s was regarded as impending, no legal significance whatever would be attributed to the husband and

wife and parent and child connection. No obligation on the one side or the other would arise from this connection. In the 1918 Code nothing was said of the obligation of maintenance and support save where the spouse or child was destitute, and in this latter case the rationale of the obligation was not a natural relationship but the desirability of transferring from the State to the individual the economic responsibility for the non-productive elements in society. The duty of maintenance was specifically incorporated in the Code of 1926, but again the motive was the same. The Soviet did not intend to make a social security system a substitute for the economic dependence of the infant and disabled upon their next-of-kin. This is clear from the judicial interpretation of the provision in question. As the Supreme Court of the Soviet stated in a judgment in 1929, "the right of maintenance may not be used as a means of promoting parasitism and leisure of some members of the family at the labour and expense of others."

The prevailing attitude towards sexual relationship was reflected also in legislation in 1920 legalizing abortion, and in the failure of all the Soviet codes save those of Georgia and Azerbaijan to penalize bigamy. In those Republics the motive behind the employment of the law in the suppression of bigamy was the elimination of polygamy as "a relic of tribal society, based on the exploitation of woman's toil." The Federal Supreme Court in 1929 even went so far as to confirm on appeal the decision of an inferior court that two persons were entitled to share as wives in the distribution of a deceased's estate. Bigamy ceased during the 1920s to have any juridical significance, and was regarded as a sociological concept alone. In none of the Republics was incest or homosexuality a criminal offence.

The more responsible elements in the government of the Supreme Soviet would seem to have been early aware of the moral excesses which the orthodox theory and its implementation in the law invited and encouraged. Lenin himself exclaimed "our youth has gone mad, completely mad. It has become the evil fate of many young men and girls. Its devotees assert that this is Marxist theory." Official pronouncements on marriage became less and less extravagant in their terms, and promiscuity was increasingly discouraged. According to the few statistics available to us, whether or not they are reliable, the powers that be had

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occasion for alarm by the mid-1930s. In Moscow in 1935 the number of abortions (estimated at over 12,000 a month) exceeded substantially the number of births. In 1935 for every 1,000 marriages there were 383 divorces. (It is assumed that the figures relate to registered marriages, and it may be taken that the incidence of "divorce" was much higher in the case of unregistered "marriages"). The dissolution of family life brought additional evils in its train, not the least of which was a staggering spread of juvenile delinquency. The administrative branch of the Procuracy was overburdened with the task of locating putative fathers, entertaining affiliation suits against them, and enforcing payments of maintenance. Anyone with experience in this field in our courts will appreciate the impossible task which the Procuracy was expected to undertake. The problem of the unmarried mother became one of economic urgency and national importance, especially since it occasioned widespread absenteeism from factories and farms.

After 1935 the pendulum began inevitably to return to the opposite extreme. The traditional institutions of social stability were consolidated by a series of steps which indicate an awareness of the need for continuity with the past and of a sense of tradition. The objectives were the elimination of delinquency, the increase in the birth rate, and the integration of the family in the economic system. In their totality those steps were characteristic of the new phase of Soviet policy which has become defined as "Stalinism," the indefinite projection of the "transitional stage" of Marxist organization. The new line was reflected in an article of 28 May, 1936, in *Pravda*: "so called free love and loose sexual life are throughout bourgeois and have nothing in common either with socialistic principle and ethics or with the rules of behaviour of a Soviet citizen. Marriage is the most serious affair in life. Fatherhood and Motherhood become virtues in the Soviet." Gsovski quotes an even more "reactionary" enunciation of Boshko, a professor of law, in an official publication: "Marriage by its basis and in the spirit of the Soviet law is in principle essentially a lifelong union. Moreover, marriage receives its full lifeblood and value for the Soviet State only if there is birth of children, proper upbringing, and if the spouses experience the highest happiness of motherhood and fatherhood." These, and other references to the "sanctity" of marriage do not imply any

acceptance of the traditional metaphysical character of the institution, but are intended to impress the Russian people who are peculiarly awed by whatever is sacrosanct. Nevertheless from 1936 the tendency has been towards a metaphysical conception of marriage, whether it be recognized officially as such or not. After 1935 parents could be fined for the delinquency of their children, and were made jointly liable with children over the age of fourteen years for acts of intentional violence and damage. This liability was extended by Decree of the Praesidium in 1941 to acts of negligence. In short, the concept of parental responsibility was restored. In 1934 homosexuality was made an offence, and in 1936 abortion. In 1938 judgment was given that a marriage registered while a previous marriage remained undissolved did not create any juridical consequence for the parties since "the registration of the second marriage was illegal and subject to annulment." Legal text books reflected the tendency to regard bigamy as illegal, though not necessarily criminal. It assumed a criminal character by legislation constituting marriage for the sole purpose of seduction rape.

In 1934 a very practical obstacle to divorce was introduced in the form of a scale of fees. Fifty roubles was made the fee for the first divorce, one hundred and fifty for the second, and three hundred for subsequent ones. The tremendous losses in population during the war accelerated the process of strengthening of the marriage bond, and the practical result was a Decree of the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet of 8 July, 1944, which was inspired by the desire to encourage large families. The preamble stated that "care for mother and child and support of the institution of the family have always been among the most important duties of the Soviet State." After providing for unmarried mothers, establishing State grants to large families, extending privileges to expectant mothers, and creating a graded tax on bachelors and fathers of small families, the Decree proceeded to restore the legal institution of marriage. Only a registered marriage would for the future be recognized as having legal effect, and as creating rights and duties of husband and wife and parenthood. The mother of a child born before the date of the Decree outside a registered marriage might claim alimony from the natural father after affiliation process. After that date, however, such children have no right to the father's name, no succession to

his property, and no claim on his support. The mother is provided for by the State alone. In substance, therefore, the traditional distinction of legitimacy is restored even if the terminology is not. As one Russian commentator observes, "it remains to be seen whether the change in legal status will be followed in daily life by a social stigma of illegitimacy."

To what extent the new marriage law has conduced to a stabilizing of family relationships can, however, be gauged only from a consideration of the divorce provisions of the Decree and their application in the courts. The unrestricted competence of either partner to dissolve the marriage without reasons, and in opposition to the will of the other partner, was ended, and a judicial process of divorce introduced.

Divorce is no longer merely a matter of registering the discontinuance of cohabitation but constitutes an annulment of a status relationship. It is granted not as of right upon the withdrawal of consensus, but only at the discretion of the court. No grounds for divorce are stated in the Decree of the Praesidium, and it is the responsibility of the court in each instance to determine whether the reasons put forward for terminating the marriage are sufficient. It is clear, therefore, that the Decree has not altered the basis of Soviet marriage law, namely the voluntary consent of the parties, but has merely instituted a procedure whereby indiscriminate changing of spouses might be checked. This seems to be clear from the attitude of the courts. Accurate statistics are not available, but Sverdlov<sup>1</sup> analysed some four hundred divorce suits decided by eighteen courts, and extracted from them certain principles on which the courts have acted.

Sixty-six per cent of the suits were initiated with the consent of the respondent. In every such case a decree was granted, and Sverdlov concludes that mutual consent is regarded by the courts as sufficient in itself to constitute a ground for divorce. Of the contested suits twenty-three per cent were refused on the grounds of absence of guilt. In each case there were infant children. Decrees were granted in the remaining contested suits on the ground of adultery, mutual incompatibility or chronic

<sup>1</sup> In an article published in *Sovetskoye Gosudarstvo i Pravo*, No. 7, p. 22, the periodical of the Law Institute of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Science (translated for the Anglo-Soviet Law Association).

illness. Of the total number of petitions presented only five-six per cent were refused, and it seems that Gsovski's comment<sup>1</sup> that it is now more difficult to obtain a divorce in Soviet Russia than in many capitalist countries should be treated with caution. If there is any real restraint on divorce it arises from certain practical considerations and procedural obstruction and not from the principle. The fees for filing the petition and registering the decree, for example, are scaled to restrain the irresponsible. A divorce costs, according to the court's discretion, between six hundred and two thousand one hundred roubles (between £55 and £193 approximately). In addition the petitioner has to pay for the publication of the papers in the suit in the local press. The procedure is cumbersome. There must be an attempt at reconciliation before the People's Court, and only then may a petition be presented to the divorce court.

In addition to the cases assembled by Sverdlov several others are available which seem to indicate that mere incompatibility is no ground for divorce when there are infant children, and even in cases where there are not. When two grandparents quarrelled over the bringing up of grandchildren after forty years of married life, a divorce granted on this ground was reversed by the Supreme Court of the R.S.F.S.R. In 1948 the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R., in reversing a decision of the Supreme Court of the Azerbaijan Soviet, discussed the purpose underlying the Decree of 1944. That Decree, it stated in the judgment,

is directed to the strengthening in every way of the family and of the marital life of the spouses. The dissolution of marriage can consequently take place only if such facts were established by the court as provide a basis for considering that the family has disintegrated and there is no possibility of its restoration. The reference to "incompatibility," without explanation of how it manifested itself, is obviously insufficient and cannot provide a basis for the decision pronouncing the dissolution of the marriage. The court also ought not to have overlooked the fact that the spouses have been married since 1945 and that they have a little boy.

It must be noted, however, that both these suits were disputed.

Further evidence of a trend away from the notion of the State as the sole source of education and in favour of the traditional role of the parent is found in the few reports of custody suits

<sup>1</sup> *Soviet Civil Law*, Michigan, 1948, p. 125.

available to us. The Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R., in an appeal from the Supreme Court of Georgia, discussed at length the basis of a grant of custody. The court, it was held, must consider primarily the interests of the child. In doing so it must bear in mind that those interests are not secured solely by the material conditions necessary for its upbringing. The peculiar relation of mother and infant was more important than any material conditions. The case is rather significant in view of the fact that the father, who was a professor of pedagogy, was in a position to give the child an advanced communist education, whereas the mother, it was admitted, was not. Custody was nevertheless given to the mother.

To what extent the modern law represents any decisive trend away from dogmatic Marxism is difficult to decide in the absence of more reliable facts, and it is equally difficult and perhaps unwise to suggest in what direction the law of domestic relations will next advance. It would seem that a tension has been set up in Soviet law, between the conflicting demands of Marxist theory, with its repudiation of all status relationships, and the need to preserve consonance between human nature and social organization. The present situation is clearly a compromise, despite the myth of Revolutionary continuity, and is, in consequence, highly unstable. It seems, however, that the matrimonial bond will continue, under the pressure of economics if for no other reason, to consolidate itself. The law is creating in many directions a vested interest in the permanence of marriage. When a spouse dies his or her share in the matrimonial property does not fall into the estate but is transmitted automatically to the survivor. The matrimonial home, if acquired after marriage, can only be disposed of with the consent of both parties. The same tendency is emphasized in legal texts in the assembly of matters of domestic concern under one rubric; in the provision for guardianship of infants and curatorship of minors under rules analogous to those of Roman law systems; in the like provision for adoption; and in an elaborate code of maintenance laws under which destitute or infirm brothers, sisters, grandparents and parents may claim support from their relatives. It might be concluded, therefore, that the types of social relation, which the Civil Code preserved only in the interests of national expediency, are recognized to be so fundamental as to create of their own character rights and

duties which the law must continue to recognize and protect. Soviet law has thus ceased to be merely a technique subservient to a political goal, and is tending to base itself, however unwilling, ever more securely on the natural law.

## A PROTESTANT 'SUMMA THEOLOGICA'

By  
M. C. D'ARCY

**P**AUL TILLICH, formerly a professor in Germany and now at the Union Theological Seminary in New York, has been acclaimed as the greatest Protestant thinker since Calvin, as the new St. Thomas Aquinas. To take one representative opinion, Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr says that Tillich's *magnum opus*, his *Systematic Theology*, "will undoubtedly become a landmark in the history of modern theology." It is

a prodigious and impressive undertaking which must be compared with the efforts of theology which begin with Origen and run through Augustine and Aquinas. If Karl Barth is the Tertullian of our day, abjuring ontological speculations for fear that they may obscure or blunt the kerygma of the Gospel, Tillich is the Origen of our period, seeking to relate the Gospel message to the disciplines of our culture and to the whole history of culture.

So convinced are his contemporaries of his importance that they have given him first place in a series of volumes in the *Library of Living Theology*. This series follows the method adopted in the *Library of Living Philosophers*. The philosopher chosen gives first an account of himself; then in succeeding chapters aspects of his work are tested and judged by distinguished experts, and in the last chapter the subject of the book replies to criticisms.

Protestant theology certainly called for an attempt such as that

which is being made by Tillich. From the beginning it laid emphasis on faith and experience and showed a disliking for human reason and for what it took to be human authority. It passed, therefore, through a long phase of "experience," and then when the nineteenth century forced Protestantism to take notice of the many changes in Biblical criticism and of the new ways of approach to theistic problems, it inclined to liberal theology. This phase relied on human scholarship and human reason, and after a while many became alarmed by the inroads into the ancient beliefs and felt that the human approach was destroying the very citadel of faith. The reaction came in the kerygmatic teaching of Karl Barth. Man's efforts could do nothing but spoil the divine message; in fact all men's efforts were so much waste product, and all human interpretation of the divine is like so much scribbling in a sanctuary. The effect of such teaching was in part salutary, as it restored the inviolability of God's word, and conveyed the sense of the awful mystery of God. The supernatural cannot be invaded by the natural, and, as the tradition held, man can do nothing save in grace. At the same time the intransigence of this teaching was such as to leave nothing on one side but mystery and grace and on the other sterile thought. The child was emptied out with the bath water, and in time Barth himself had to guarantee some safe lines of approach to understanding the Gospel.

The problem, therefore, became this: how to keep the separateness of the divine, its sacrosanctity, and at the same time give room for human history, human experience and thought. The Catholic Church has given its solution to this problem, and its answer can be seen in the pages of the great theologians like St. Thomas. Tillich has now provided a new answer which differs completely from the Catholic one, and is explicitly and almost defiantly Protestant. It is a great achievement and deserves the admiration of the Protestant world. As one of them, Theodore M. Greene, has written:

In long-range terms Tillich's thought is, in intention and achievement, conservative of the best in our Hellenic-Christian, Greco-Roman, democratic-scientific tradition. Its final effect is affirmative, not negative, constructive rather than iconoclastic. In short, Tillich notably exemplifies his own basic methodological principle, which he calls the "Protestant principle," both in its affirmative and its

negative aspects, its Yea as well as its Nay. He declares his opposition to all absolutizing of the relative, that is to all idolatry, and also to all relativizing of the Absolute, that is, to all forms of relativistic nihilism. But, simultaneously, he gives his unswerving support to all genuine human creativity and discovery—in art and science, theology and religious ritual, political organization and social action. Herebukes the churches and the theologians for their perennial opposition to secular effort and their repeated failure to incorporate valid secular insights into their thinking. He welcomes all the positive achievements of modern science (including depth psychology), modern art (even in its most tortured experiments), and modern philosophy (even when it is explicitly unreligious or anti-Christian).

To do all this is a herculean task, and one may wonder whether it is worth while. Tillich believes that it is worth while because he does not agree with the Catholic teaching that there is a separate world of the supernatural. This mistake, as he regards it, has resulted in the shrivelling of Christianity, its alienation from the modern world. The divine truth is to be found in the present situation; it does not belong to the past. The coming of Christ was the supreme moment or kairos, when the divine and the human met; but in every age there is a "moment" or kairos, and in history and in the present predicament is to be found the meeting of the absolute and the relative. The Protestant Reformation goes on, so to speak, renewing itself, and never tied by old formulae or credal statements. The problem for him is to keep both the absolute character of the divine message and to allow it to subsume into itself all the actions and thoughts of man, or in other words to grant full autonomy to man and unite it with theonomy. As against the old Protestant orthodoxy and the Catholic theology he does "not start with the answers of the Christian message but with an analysis of the human situation. As a result the terms in which the answers are given are determined by the nature of the questions far more than in Protestant orthodoxy. Thus his existentialist approach has substantial advantages over that of Catholic or of Protestant orthodoxy." (George F. Thomas.) More specifically this approach means that he has to correlate what is happening now, relative and human and valuable, with what is divine and absolute. Tillich calls this the "method of correlation." It means, to quote Tillich, that "every part of my system should include one section in which

the question is developed by an analysis of human existence and existence generally, and one section in which the theological answer is given on the basis of the sources, the medium and the norm of systematic theology."

Even granted that this method be justifiable, it is clearly no easy one. It presupposes the power to understand what is true and relevant in the present situation and the power to provide a right theological answer. Tillich advances beyond his fellow Protestants by accepting the terrain for metaphysics, which he prefers to call ontology. He says that philosophy "deals with the structure of being in itself," whereas theology "deals with the meaning of being for us." The philosopher is concerned with knowledge, and no external authority should be allowed to impede him in his search for the essence of things. The theologian looks at reality from the existentialist standpoint; he must "look where that which concerns him ultimately is manifest." His interest is soteriological; he is not detached. The two interests overlap, but do not conflict. Indeed there is no separation, because the Christian faith is not a separate domain; the Catholic scholastics blundered in distinguishing two worlds, the one fixed and eternally the same, the other the temporal order which is ever shifting. The Christian message is ever present, being both the judgment and the regenerative power of history. Like the phoenix, faith is ever renewing itself. The Christian message is therefore both absolute and undying and related to the existing cultural situation. To avoid humanizing and reducing this message to time, Tillich says that we begin with an analysis of the present situation; inevitably this situation has its problems and antinomies, and it is by putting the right questions that we learn the truth and revelation of God.

If I understand this aright something like the following occurs. The technical reason seeks the meaning of reality; it involves itself in many problems, some perennial and others contemporary; it realizes that there are depths beyond the technical reason, "leagues beyond those leagues there is more sea." This gives rise to the sense of the mystery of existence causing an "ontological shock," which Tillich also calls "ecstasy" or numinous astonishment, a condition of mind when reason is raised to a new level, that of grace or inspiration. Warmth of appreciation and love join with detached knowledge, and in this junction the

old distinction of the natural and supernatural, nature and grace disappears. Religion has been defined by Tillich as "ultimate concern," a description which fits into his anti-supernatural and anti-dogmatic theology. The passage from knowledge of reality and of our situation to that of numinous astonishment and concern with existence is not violent. "Religion is the depth-dimension of culture, and theology points to this dimension not only in philosophy, but also in art and politics." The Divine again must not be thought of as inhabiting a transcendent world above nature; it is found in the ecstatic character of this world as its transcendent Depth and Ground. Depth and Ground are the favourite descriptions of God. He also uses such words as "absolute," "unconditional" and "infinite." He denies that the existence of God can be proved, and in fact in his fond adherence to the German habit of dialectic he says that "the first word . . . spoken by religion to the people of our time must be a word spoken against religion." We are told too that "God is being itself." "The being of God cannot be understood as the existence of a being alongside others or above others. If God is a being, he is subject to the categories of finitude, especially to space and substance. Even if he be called the 'highest being' in the sense of the 'most perfect' and the 'most powerful' being the situation is not changed." The Divine reveals itself to man as he pores over reality, and comes on an answer to the question man raises in his uttermost concern. The unconditional is demanded as the answer, even though this unconditional cannot be set out in any human category. The holy is always with us though we perceive it not. The eyes of our spirit may be closed, and it needs the shock of revelation, the kerygmatic message to raise us from despair. To be or not to be, there is the beginning of religious experience and faith. "The object of theology can be verified only by a participation in which the testing theologian risks himself in the ultimate sense of 'to be or not to be.' "

What then of the many descriptions of God and the Christian credal statements about God? They are not, as might at first impression be supposed, ruled out. Tillich is anxious to preserve the best in tradition while leaving the way clear for new experience and new situations. All the descriptions are human "projections" on this realm of ultimate concern. But they serve to throw light upon both God and man. "Anthropomorphic symbols are

adequate for speaking of God religiously. . . . Nothing is more inadequate and disgusting than the attempt to translate the concrete symbols of the Bible into less concrete and less powerful symbols. Theology should not weaken the concrete symbols, but it must analyse them and interpret them in abstract ontological terms." They remain, however, symbols and myths, and the theologian and philosopher have the "obligation," as Theodore M. Greene says, "to create new symbols in each generation, so that the language in which God and his world are thought about and described may be a language that is 'transparent,' a Gestalt of Grace for the generation then alive."

Words such as "Ground and Depth" of being have a religious connotation (Canon Demant in his recent broadcasts has pointed out that they are favourite words of mystical writers) but for Tillich they have also great ontological significance. Man's being, he says, is

not only hidden in the creative ground of the divine life; it also is manifest to itself and to other life within the whole of reality. Man does exist, and his existence is different from his essence. Man and the rest of reality are not only "inside" of the divine life but also "outside" it. Man has left the ground in order to "stand upon" himself, to be actually what he essentially is, in order to be *finite freedom*. This is the point at which the doctrine of the creation and of the fall join. . . . Fully developed creatureliness is fallen creatureliness, the creature has actualized its freedom in so far as it is outside the creative ground of the divine life. . . . To be outside the divine life means to stand in actualized freedom, in an existence which is no longer united with essence. Seen from the one side this is the end of creation. Seen from the other side this is the beginning of the fall. Freedom and destiny are correlates.

This passage contains many of the pivotal terms of Tillich's philosophy, and as they are difficult terms it is perhaps hardly fair to quote them without further explanation of his philosophical system. But this is no easy matter and impossible in a short essay. He has borrowed the language of ancient philosophy and converted it into something of his own with debts to Schelling, Heidegger and the existentialists. The use of correlation and of dialectic is clear, though whether it serves to throw light on the Christian mysteries is another matter. In the passage quoted, Tillich is dealing with creation and the fall of man. What in the

Biblical story is a divine event standing at the beginning of human history is translated into a metaphysic of man, which seems to identify the fall with creatureliness. If this be so then the coming of Christ and the redemption also must be part of the necessity of metaphysics.

The unique place which Tillich assigns to Christianity is not immediately discernible. He would answer, no doubt, that that is so because in giving full weight to philosophy the kerygmatic side of Christianity is kept in the background. In Tillich's theology the two have to be correlated. In order to understand how this can be done, the key word *kairos* must be introduced. "If a special moment of time is good for the fulfilment of something, this moment is its *kairos*," we are told. It has a general sense when it "refers to every turning point in history, in which the eternal judges and transforms the temporal." Whenever a culture is in the doldrums and has lost its native vigour it asks for new life, and that is provided by the divine answer. To use a scriptural expression, it is "judged"; the estrangement from being is overcome and a new reconciliation found between the eternal and the temporal. History is a succession of crises, to be looked upon dialectically in that the passing away of one answer to a temporal problem must be succeeded by another, which in turn will be in accordance with the need of the time. This is the manner in which God and man are reconciled; but there is beside this succession of *kairoi*, one supreme *kairos*, the coming of Christ. The New Testament speaks of the fullness of time, and in accordance with this Tillich regards Christ as the final revelation, the "*concrete absolute*," who certifies that all the crises in history and in thought have a promise of reconciliation. "In the New Being which is manifest in Jesus as the Christ, the most *concrete* of all possible forms of concreteness, a personal life, is the bearer of that which is *absolute*, without condition or restriction," and this absoluteness is shown "by the complete transparency and the complete self-sacrifice of the medium in which it appears."

Not only is Christ the final answer as *kairos*. The Gospel is a message of salvation, and in Christ, the Word made Flesh, all that is to come must find its truth or true significance. The *Kairos*, that is, is controlled by the *Logos*, and in the future *kairoi*, as for instance our present plight, the answer must be tested, controlled and illumined by the *Logos*. What this means

is excellently summed up in an essay by A. T. Mollegen, and I cannot do better than quote what he has to say:

Christ is the New Being transcending existential being because it is the actualization of essential being. And He is the New Being transcending essential being because the New Being exists. The New Being manifests itself against, and overcomes nonbeing. . . . The Biblical Christ is the divine life received by perfect human faith which knows doubt but not despair, by courage which is anxious about death but not in terror, by finite freedom which does not exalt its finitude, by desire which desires only the Kingdom of God for the world and the world for the Kingdom. This is man in unity with God. . . .

The portrait therefore focusses in two representative pictures, the Crucified and the Risen Christ. . . . The Cross exposes the full enmity of existence to essential being and the undefeatable presence of the New Being in existence. The Resurrection shows the New Being as the victorious power over the self-destructiveness of existence. The Risen Christ is the Lord of all powers, visible and invisible. The angels cannot separate the faithful from the love of God in Christ Jesus and themselves become possibilities for salvation. The Crucifixion-Resurrection event is the breaking through into human consciousness and existence of the New Being in Christ. The Divine life maintains community with all human life, and through human life with all existence by taking upon itself the fact and the consequences of existential separation (sin and tragedy). The Divine love suffers with, but not instead of, those who receive that love; it suffers for, but not instead of, those who resist it.

In the last lines of the quotation just made love is made the final word, and Tillich ends on that note. He has much to say of love as of many other cardinal points in philosophy and theology, of which there is no space here to make mention. Enough has been written, I hope, to give some idea of the dimensions of Tillich's thought. The stretch of that thought deserves unstinted admiration, and even if it is to be judged a failure, it is a noble failure. Is it then a failure? To judge from the comments of Protestant theologians they are both scandalized and gratified. The system marks a great break with the old Protestant ideas of Christ and faith and history and salvation. In so far as there is a traditional orthodoxy in Protestantism this is so new as to be a

new Christian religion. But Tillich is emphatic that he is expressing the Protestant principle, and undoubtedly he has carried to new lengths certain ideas which are dear to Protestant thought. With them he challenges the unswerving tradition of the Catholic Church. He thinks that Catholic theologians have made a fatal separation of nature and supernature, time and eternity, man, I suppose, and God. History moves on, and by its disregard of time the Church's doctrine and symbols are now like the stones on Salisbury Plain, the monuments of a cult which is dead and gone. The Catholic Church

wrongly looks for complete fulfilment in a supernature or supra-history unconnected with history. This dualism can only issue in a non-historical interpretation of history. Time is created in the ground of the divine life, and eternity is therefore essentially related to it as the transcendent unity of the dissected moments of existentialist time.

This summary of Tillich's criticism by James Luther Adams represents his attitude, I think; but, if so, how mistaken a view it is of the Catholic conception of history. Moreover it illustrates the difficulties of Tillich's position. For what philosophic meaning can be attributed to the words "time created in the ground of the divine life"? If created, then it is not the divine life, and how can it be created in the ground of God? Moreover if eternity is "essentially" related to time, then eternity cannot be without time, and how then can it be eternity? God himself becomes essentially temporal. True, the next words say that eternity is the transcendent unity of the dissected moments of existential time, but "transcendent" should mean so above as to be in some sense unconnected, and the unity of dissected moments of time certainly does not add up to eternity.

Philosophers, and I do not mean just Catholic philosophers, will, I am sure, find much to criticize in Tillich's system of thought. He is the heir of German philosophy, and like them he uses a language which obscures as much as it reveals. Metaphysics when it is bad pretends to say so much, and in fact says very little which is not platitudinous. To take one example. Tillich defines religion as a matter of ultimate concern. Now this is so vague that it could mean many things, and I do not refer to such senses as that the future of Russia is a matter of ultimate concern to me, or again the death of my dearest friend. Lucretius

denied religion, but his books are full of deep concern with man. So too an atheistic evolutionary theory deals with matters of ultimate concern, and one could multiply examples. But we feel that we know roughly what Tillich is trying to say because we know independently what religion is and can read into his language a meaning. Even when he chooses another description of religion as the existentialist approach, we are not quite at a loss, despite the misuse of the word "existence." But when from these inaccurate descriptions by means of essence and being and ground of being and dialectic Tillich goes on to construct an imposing system of philosophy and theology we want to cry halt, and take his language to pieces. This indeed must be done since he regards the work of the autonomous reason as so important in his system. If that be wrong the whole structure of his Christian theology falls to pieces. And we wonder how on his own premisses it can avoid being if not wrong at any rate provisional and temporary? Time enters into his theology and time makes what is contemporary faded parchment as new crises appear. The terms of his description of the eternal are subject to a dialectic, and even his most constant and sacrosanct terms must grow old. When Barth threw out all human language he did what he intended to do, that is safeguard the purity and majesty of the divine message. The Catholic theologian is also logical in keeping human language because he believes that man can utter words which are everlasting true and independent of time. But Tillich wants to write a systematic theology and at the same time admit relativity into human thought. As a result he leaves us without a true knowledge of God, and in place of an abiding theology he leaves us with time and history, the creature of time, where God fulfils himself in many ways.

The most noticeable weakness, therefore, in this new attempt to construct a theology is the weakness of its parts. The construction shows the genius of a master, but the building cannot stand because he has used a bad philosophy, and he has lost the true God in the sands of metaphysics; he has given no ground for faith and he has left us uncertain about the historical character of Christ and His precise relation to the Godhead. One small example will perhaps show the dangers which are inherent in this form of Protestantism. Historically both the Catholic Church and Protestantism have preached a doctrine of unworldliness. This

unworldliness is so strongly inculcated in the Gospels and in the epistles of St. Paul and St. Peter that all down the ages Christians have sought the Kingdom of God and wondered whether the "things of this world" had any lasting value. Tillich turns this doctrine upside down and claims that the kingdom of God must be sought in time, and he adds as a special contribution his theory of kairos. "If a special moment of time is good for the fulfilment of something, this moment is its kairos." According to this theory the New Being is brought about and the temporal moment is touched with the eternal. We might ask how we can know what is the special moment of time which is good, and the question is an anxious one seeing that Christianity keeps alive and fulfils its function by mastering time. I do not think that this all-important question can be answered with any certainty. What is worse, wrong answers may be given, and then in the name of Christianity hideous wrong may be done and falsehood spread. Tillich himself, as he admits, has been guilty of mistaken insight into the kairos. After the First World War he judged that the opportunity had come for a Christian regeneration, the kairos, in fact. He sympathized with the socialist movement, with the idea of a class struggle, even with the Marxist concept of "ideology." To quote Eduard Heimann, he thought that "religious socialism after the First World War seemed to be that judgment on, and transformation of the temporal 'which created a crisis in the depth of human existence.'" Nazism and the form which Marxist Communism has taken was far from his thought. But if he can make such mistakes in interpreting the kairos in time, what is to prevent greater mistakes by lesser men, and where is the guarantee of truth, and the abiding glory preached by the first apostles? That glory full of grace and truth is not subject to such dimming, nor is it at the mercy of time and history.

No adequate criticism, however, can be made of Tillich's main views without at the same time giving a fair presentation of the intricacy and strength of his many arguments. He has put down nothing without much thought and reverence, and therefore to express respect for the monument he has built is a more fitting conclusion. He is mistaken, I believe, in his attempt to make an alliance between Christianity and the world, but what he has to say on history and the kingdom of God, on the kairos, on love

and the nature of personality is full of suggestiveness and a spur to more conservative theologians. The thought of the Church develops. It has the secret of keeping the truth of Christ immune from purely human addition. Nevertheless that truth should spread its light on the contemporary scene, and in turn theologians should learn from the God-given talents of men in every age how to look anew at the inexhaustible riches of the Logos. Tillich has tried to do this, and if his conclusions are not acceptable as they stand, they do convince us that there is much still to learn and to discover.

## THE CONCERN OF GRAHAM GREENE

By  
W. PETERS

M R. GRAHAM GREENE opens one of his essays with the remark that "every creative writer worth our consideration . . . is a victim: a man given over to an obsession." It should be both of interest and importance for a right understanding and appreciation of his novels to know what Mr. Greene's obsession is. In this essay I confine myself principally to what by fairly general consent is his best work: *The Power and the Glory*, *The Heart of the Matter*, and *The End of the Affair*. A comparison between these novels and his earlier stories shows at once that here the religious sense is an integrating element, thus giving them a dimension which is only occasionally and almost accidentally present in his early books. A preoccupation with the psychological make-up of his characters has given place to an absorbing interest in all that is implied by this new dimension, which, as I shall try to explain, gives his main problem its obsessive force.

Speaking about books that influenced him as a boy, Mr. Greene

mentions Marjorie Bowen's *The Viper of Milan* and comments thus: "Anyway she had given me my pattern—religion might later explain it to me in other terms, but the pattern was already there—perfect evil walking the world where perfect good can never walk again, and only the pendulum ensures that after all in the end justice is done." Mr. Greene's obsession concerns the evil in this world, or more accurately the evil in the individual; and this to such an extent that to some readers it amounts to a morbid interest in evil man. It is Scobie's adulteries, briberies and suicide, the whisky priest's greed for money, lustfulness and boundless weakness, Sarah Miles's and Bendrix's cold-blooded decision to eliminate God from their love-affair and even from their lives, that hold the reader's attention. But it must be noticed that this preoccupation with man's wickedness goes side by side with an undisguised sympathy with sinful man, with all sinful men, even with such unpleasant characters as Wilson, Bendrix or Yusef, in fact with the devil himself, because of the tears he sheds when a carefully wrought weapon to seduce a boy failed in the end—the theme of that fine story, *The Hint of an Explanation*.

Now Mr. Greene knows that—to use his own words—as a creative writer he is damned to sympathy with his own creations. And he is alive to the fact that this sympathy with his wicked characters will be interpreted as condonation of evil and as a lack of appreciation of those who are good and just. But this sympathy with sinful man does not imply disloyalty towards what is good. If, however, anyone cannot see this, then Mr. Greene claims the right to be disloyal and considers such disloyalty the novelist's privilege: "Loyalty confines us to accepted opinions; loyalty forbids us to comprehend sympathetically our dissident fellows; but disloyalty encourages us to roam experimentally through any human mind." This may sound an overstatement, but Mr. Greene's meaning is clarified by the example he adds: "It was an act of justice to trace the true source of action in Macbeth, the murderer of his king, and Shakespeare's play has for all time altered our conception of the usurper." Mr. Greene makes full use of the novelist's privilege, to some disconcertingly so, and he writes, as he says, from the point of view of the black as well as of the white square of the chess-board; doubt and even denial are given their chance of self-expression, and this for the sake of justice and of freedom.

The relation that exists between Mr. Greene's obsession with evil in man and his sympathy with the sinner calls now for closer inspection. Mr. Greene is incapable of making an artificial separation between man's evil action and the man himself. He can never consider the evil by itself, but only in so far as it proceeds from the individual. Evil in itself is to be detested and can never be matter for sympathy. But however detestable an evil action may be, there is always left a chance to sympathize with the evil-doer if we trace *the true source of action*. Or, as Scobie says to his wife, who will never forgive young Pemberton for causing trouble (his suicide meant to Scobie a difficult journey and a few days' absence from home): "Don't talk nonsense, dear. We'd forgive most things if we knew the facts." Or as he muses elsewhere: "If one knew the facts, would one have to feel pity even with the planets? If one reached what they called the heart of the matter."

It must be noted that the desire to know all there is to know does not mean that one is trying to come by an acceptable excuse for man's wickedness. There is no question of belittling, let alone forgiving sin. The *tout savoir c'est tout pardonner* finds no place in Mr. Greene's novels; judgment is left most severely to Almighty God. But knowing all there is to know almost always implies the discovery that man is "sins and virtues," that scarcely ever is the outward evil action the adequate reflection of a man's whole life. Only very rarely does a man express himself entirely in an evil action. So to Mr. Greene the individual is good and bad. Consequently when he is dealing with his characters, sins and virtues are not at opposite ends, miles apart with no trace of interconnection. On the contrary, the saint and the sinner, both within the human family as within each man's soul, are always close together. "Le pécheur est au coeur même du chrétienté," to quote a phrase from Péguy, which introduces *The Heart of the Matter*. Hence it is no surprise to learn of Graham Greene's conviction that the greatest saints have been men with more than a normal capacity for evil and that the most vicious have sometimes narrowly evaded sanctity. Nor are we surprised that an unstilled hankering after sanctity should break through in the whisky priest's last thoughts:

We have facts, too, we don't try to alter—that the world is unhappy whether you are rich or poor—unless you are a saint, and

there aren't many of those. . . . People had died for him, they had deserved a saint, and a tinge of bitterness spread across his mind for their sake that God hadn't thought fit to send them one.

Or again:

He felt only an immense disappointment because he had to go to God empty-handed, with nothing done at all. It seemed to him, at that moment, that it would have been quite easy to have been a saint. . . . He knew now that at the end there was only one thing that counted—to be a saint.

We understand better now, I think, why the figure of a Charles Péguy appeals so strongly to Mr. Greene—sins and virtues, almost made flesh.

It is easy to realize the difficulty facing a novelist to whom human nature is never black or white, but always "sins and virtues," or to speak again in colours, merely grey. It is the difficulty of presenting as grey a character which appears black to the undiscerning eye. This is not to say that his difficulty is to paint a black character as less black than he is, which would amount to an extenuation of his wickedness, or to an excuse for the evil done. For Mr. Greene black is black, and although he is well aware that Judas's lost childhood might go far to explain his betrayal of Christ, yet he hardly ever falls back upon heredity, bad upbringing or unfavourable circumstances to tone down the blackness of the evil. A little self-restraint and a little courage would have made the whisky priest a saint, even in the midst of all the hardships, dangers and temptations of the life of a hunted priest. "To be a human being one had to drink the cup," is all Scobie has to say about the evil-breeding atmosphere of the African colony. But the point which Mr. Greene makes with so much passion is that blackness is not the whole man; man is mostly grey. And so in fairness to his characters he is ever on the alert to draw the attention to any white there is to offset the black. For this purpose he fastens with an unmistakable predilection upon the two most typical Christian virtues there are. The first is charity. This needs no proof once we recall Scobie and Sarah Miles, both good and kind-hearted by nature. But we cannot forget how the whisky priest, in his own overwhelming misery, offers himself as a hostage to save others, how he gives his horse to the limping mestizo whom he more than suspects

of scheming his betrayal for a handful of money, how he tears his shirt in shreds to clean the wounds of the dying Indian child, how he risks his life knowingly for the chance of doing some good to the fatally wounded gringo. And it is certainly of interest and very illustrative to notice how much is made of a scar on Bendrix's shoulder "that wouldn't have been there if once he hadn't tried to protect another man's body from a falling wall"—an act of charity that symbolically engraved itself in the body of a man whose character is almost uniformly unpleasant.

Charity is closely allied to pity, and however dangerous, cruel and corruptive it may turn out to be, pity always means a heart great enough to forget itself in order to share the sufferings of others. It takes such a conspicuous place in Mr. Greene's books that there does not seem to be any need for further illustration.

Even more than charity and pity it is what for want of a better word we shall call humility that redeems so much blackness in Mr. Greene's sinners. They never judge or condemn others; they do not excuse themselves, they know themselves to be sinners and know God to be just. Sarah Miles's "I am a bitch and a fake," the whisky priest's "I am a proud, lustful, greedy man, O God, forgive me," and Scobie's honesty in regarding himself merely as a man in the ranks who had no opportunity to break the more serious rules, all bear trace of genuine humility, as do the priest's tears a few hours before his execution when he felt an immense disappointment because he had to go to God empty-handed, with nothing done at all.

In this question of black and grey Mr. Greene does not solve a problem, he presents one. So there is no sense in objecting that virtue side by side with sin makes a man illogical, even something of an enigma. Of course it does, and Mr. Greene knows it. But "one cannot always be logical," as Scobie says, and because Catholics know the truth they are liable to be far more illogical than others, and consequently have a greater capacity for evil. Hence the dread to know and face the truth, as is so pathetically shown when Rose in *The Living Room* almost frantically implores the priest, her uncle, not to make her think.

By portraying sinful man as "sins and virtues," Mr. Greene has not yet reached the heart of anybody's sinfulness, and consequently we have not yet laid bare the inmost nature of the

novelist's obsession. Evil is never confined to the person committing sin; it is, so to speak, never self-enclosed. It always reaches out into another dimension, into another world. It always points to a supernatural force or power, Satan. The account of his Mexican journey, *The Lawless Roads*, makes it clear that original sin, "the aboriginal calamity by which the world has been made overcrowded with lust and crime and unhappy love," is never outside his horizon. For him, where there is sin, there is Satan, and never is the mystery of sin grasped except in direct connection with original sin and its instigator, the devil. When he is dealing professedly with this mystery, as he is in his great novels, Satan is always there, and references to him occur frequently. Nowhere is this more evident than in *The End of the Affair*: "I have never understood why people who can swallow the enormous improbability of a personal God boggle at a personal devil. I have known so intimately the way that demon works . . ." says Bendrix and goes on to illustrate it. And we recall again *The Hint of an Explanation*, the theme of which is the inevitable defeat of Satan at a moment when victory seems assured.

Since in order to reach the heart of the matter of evil in man we have to move into another world, evil is seen to belong to the dimension of the religious and the supernatural. It is brought face to face with God. Satan never nurses sin unless it is to try, however impotently, to continue his rebellion against his one *Enemy*—an expression taken from the short story just mentioned. With a somewhat wry play upon words, we might say that Mr. Greene's novels have their triangular plots too: Satan and God fighting for the affection and loyalty of man. Consequently sin is not merely giving in to Satan for a handful of silver, or, for that matter, for all the riches of the world; sin means a man dragged in two opposite directions, two cities, two standards or whatever image is preferred. *The Power and the Glory* is not the story of a boundlessly weak man who commits sin, nor is *The Heart of the Matter* the tale of a man who almost against his will is sucked into wickedness; in both cases it is a story of a man torn between good and evil, between Satan and God, "a little Belgium, fought over by friend and enemy alike." And there is no essential difference when in *The End of the Affair* a man and a woman are pulled away from evil towards good, snatched from Satan's power into the awful love of God. It is part of Mr. Greene's conviction

that where the vultures gather it is not unnatural to expect the Son of Man as well.

Now no one denies the important part played by God in Graham Greene's best work, but attentive readers may complain that they fail to see how the part played by God in the tragedy of sinful man relieves to some extent the blackness of the sinner. That Satan's shrewdness and deceit practised upon weak and short-sighted man somehow extenuates his wickedness and moves us to sympathy, one readily admits; but where God is a loving, understanding and forgiving Father, a strong case might surely be made out that this fact makes what is black blacker still. This is a serious difficulty and its due consideration gives us the opportunity of dealing with a final aspect of Mr. Greene's obsession.

Mr. Greene's God—if we may use this expression—does not so easily fit in with the common conception of what God is or should be. He is often so outspoken as almost to offend. There is something blasphemous in Scobie's bewilderment when he fails to reconcile a child's sufferings with God's mercy, a repetition of which we meet in both *The End of the Affair*, when Sarah Miles rejects the existence of God "because you cannot have a merciful God and this despair," and in *The Living Room*, where belief in a God who allows Rose's suicide is bitterly opposed. These are only a few examples. Now it might be said that such reactions should be put down to the dimmed and blurred vision of people who are too tired to think, too muddled. This may go some way towards explaining their strident character, but it does not appear to be a quite satisfactory way of disposing of them. They are undoubtedly meant to shock. And the reason is that Mr. Greene hates to see God reduced to comprehensible and manageable proportions. He wants us to realize that we do not know a thing about the mercy of God, which is of an appalling strangeness; and something similar holds good for God's other qualities. Any shaping of God after man's own ideas, or worse, after man's wishes, is a most detestable thing, a futile and silly annihilation of a tremendous mystery. Any trifling with the idea that God should act thus, and should do this, and should not let His sun rise except on the good, which is so often implied in the arrogance and self-complacency of Catholics, is mercilessly scourged. Here we have the source of Mr. Greene's hatred of all smugness, and pious platitudes, and

dead goodness that sits and talks piously and decays all the time, complacent safety and all the rest, which we see portrayed in the smug woman of *The Power and the Glory* and which forms the background to the tragedy of *The Living Room*.

In Mr. Greene's novels God is not just a very kind father, a sort of human super-father. God is the unfathomable, before Whom a man in his right senses can only tremble, crushed by His terrible greatness, and reduced to nothingness in the realization of his own utter dependence and weakness. God is man's Lord and Master and Lawgiver, and sinful man, if he is not a downright fool, shudders at the thought of his own wickedness in the sight of such a God—and this calls forth sympathy, because man suffers agonies in this dread of God. But Mr. Greene never stops here; it would prove a one-sidedness of vision, and therefore a half-truth, if he did; and a half-truth can be more dangerous than an untruth. This same God is also a God of infinite love, a God "Who loves desperately." Mr. Greene means precisely this. There is no reduction of God's love to sweet affections and false sentimentality. Just as His mercy so often looks like punishment, His love often looks like hate, enough to scare man: "it set fire to a bush in the desert, didn't it, and smashed open graves and set the dead walking in the dark. Oh, a man like me would run a mile to get away if he felt that love around." Indeed, the whisky priest, as any serious man, instinctively feels that nearness to God will wither him, and it is understandable that in his dread of such a loving God he keeps God a comfortable distance away. Once a man admits God's desperate love, nothing will be left for him; for where God loves desperately, the only answer can be loving God desperately. And this means losing one's own life. Upon this truth turns *The End of the Affair*. Sarah Miles's conversion does not pivot upon her vow. She feels God's love about; she then discovers that keeping her vow for six weeks is not enough, nor for six months; she has to stop seeing her lover, she has to give up drinking too, and then come the first intimations that she has to eliminate everything with its terrible conclusion: "If I eliminate everything, how will I exist? . . . Where would I be all the time?" No wonder that she fights this love till there is no fight left. Similarly it is not hatred of God that almost consumes Bendrix and makes him so bitter; he is a man tortured by fear. To bow his head before God is no simple matter; it is to be a saint:

For if this God exists, I thought, and even if you—with your lusts and your adulteries and the timid lies you used to tell—can change like this, we could all be saints by leaping as you leapt, by shutting the eyes and leaping once and for all.

And he re-echoes his mistress's words when he writes:

If ever I loved like that, it would be the end of everything . . . loving Him there'd be no pleasure in anything at all with Him away. I'd even lose my work, I'd cease to be Bendrix. Sarah, I'm afraid.

Indeed, there is the misery of losing God, but there is also the terrible pain of finding God Whose name is love. The alternative before sinful man is not between a ghastly devil and a smiling God, between suffering and joy, between darkness and light. All writers who have experienced a deeply religious life know that there is darkness in the love of God, and suffering and sorrow, as there is success and prosperity for those who turn to Satan.

This leads us back to the source of Mr. Greene's sympathy with the sinner and it completes our exposition of his obsession. The sinner is a man who suffers, and if he does not suffer but is happy and contented, he is a fool or a nonentity, probably even too stupid for Hell. The soul of sinful man is the dreadful meeting point of the human, the diabolical and the divine, with all the terrible implications that follow. To interpret sympathy with the sinner as belittling sin is foolishness and only goes to prove in what grave measure many Christians today have lost the sense of mystery. For sin means both the mystery of Satan and the mystery of God. And in thus robbing modern man of the notion that sin is only a natural, unimportant, at times exciting thing, Mr. Greene has at the same time restored man's due proportions: worthy to be fought over by fallen angels and God Almighty Himself.

Mr. Greene speaks somewhere of the novelist's right to express his views and to comment. We may possibly not agree with his views and comments, but we do a novelist an injustice if we allow ourselves to be absorbed by a rather selfish interest in the story told and pass by what the vehicle is meant to convey. This is the more unforgivable when it is an obsession that makes him write and makes him write in this way. Mr. Greene's own distinction between entertainments and novels should be a warning

to every reader: it is possible to revel in the music and yet fail completely to catch the melody in its many subtle variations. To continue the metaphor: we have drawn attention to its main theme only, an attentive ear will hear how its variations pervade the whole and all its parts.

## RUBENS AND HIS CIRCLE

*The Jesuit Baroque Phase*

By

TUDOR EDWARDS

**I**N FLANDERS AND THE LOW COUNTRIES the paradox of art reaching its apogee in a period of economic decadence was not uncommon. As the Bruges school of painting under Memlinc and the Van Eycks reached its zenith during the economic decline of Bruges in the late fifteenth century, so Antwerp, which supplanted Bruges, presented the same anomaly in the first half of the seventeenth century. Even in the sixteenth century Antwerp had fostered the work of such painters and craftsmen as Quentin Metsys, Cornelis Floris and Dominic van Waghemakere, while Christopher Plantin, the celebrated printer, had been at work there, as had Aegidius (Pieter Gillis), the editor of the letters of Erasmus and of the Latin version of Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*. But the glories of Antwerp—and of Belgium—belong to Rubens and the seventeenth century.

It were impertinent to attempt any assessment of the vast and complex world of Pieter-Paul Rubens (1577-1640) in the space at our disposal. To his gift as painter, however, must be added those, generally less known, as decorator and architect. There is, for example, the painted ceiling of the Banqueting Hall in Whitehall, the painting of 137 scenes from Ovid for the Torre

della Parada of Madrid, the political allegories commissioned by Marie de Medici for the walls of the Luxembourg, and the decoration of the Jesuit Church in Antwerp; there are his designs for those remarkable flamboyant triumphal arches erected on the occasion of the Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand's entry into Antwerp in 1635, and there are those for several Antwerp gateways, for the altars of several churches, for his own house, and much else. The whole world of flesh and spirit was his oyster, and everything came to him with equal facility, but above all he exalted the splendour and pomp of the aristocracy and the Catholicism of the Counter-Reformation led by the Jesuits.

Rubens was himself a champion of the Baroque, the art form with which the Jesuits were identified, and he acted in the capacity of *paterfamilias* to a wide circle of painters, sculptors and architects, many of whom belonged to the Society of Jesus. In Belgium the Baroque, eminently suited to the taste of the wealthy Flemish burghers, was to enjoy a long and successful vogue, and when Rubens bought an old house near the Place de Meir in 1610 he rebuilt it in the style of a Genoese palace. On the courtyard he added a wing adorned with caryatides, busts and garlands, the north front of the studio having the figures of Mars, Juno, Jupiter and Vesta, with busts of Plato, Socrates, Sophocles and Marcus Aurelius set beneath the windows, and the inner court framed by a Baroque portico or triumphal arch surmounted with bronze figures of Minerva and Mercury. This house might almost have been regarded as a workshop and arsenal of the Society of Jesus. Here Rubens drew his designs for the fittings and decoration of the Jesuit Church in Antwerp, here he painted the full-length portrait of St. Ignatius for the Jesuit Seminary of Antwerp (which now hangs in a green and gilt *salon* of Warwick Castle), and *The Martyrdom of St. Lievin* for the Jesuit Church of Ghent (now in the Brussels Museum). Here he worked with his collaborators, among them Anthony van Dyck (with Velasquez, the greatest portrait painter of the seventeenth century) and Jacob Jordaens (a painter remarkable for the truculence and colour of his pantheistic studies), Artus Quellin, Daniel Seghers, Cornelius Schut, Gerard Zeghers and many others. The work of all these satellites is no less intriguing and is often of no less merit. As the dominating force behind a brilliant coterie of artists and craftsmen, Rubens was truly *abba*, and all his Flemish contemporaries

owed something to him, though conversely he has sometimes been given the credit for the work of his colleagues. About his own house were the patrician houses of his friends, that, for example, of the burgomaster Nicholas Rockox, who commissioned the painter's *Christ on the Cross* for the Recollects church, and for whose tomb Rubens's *The Incredulity of St. Thomas* was originally destined. He was also a frequent visitor to the Van Lierre mansion, which the Society of Jesus restored just before the last war and which is now the St. Ignatius High School of Commerce.

The Antwerp church of St. Jacques may be regarded as a repository of the work of this circle. The choir and chapels are themselves of the seventeenth century, and they are filled with such lavish craftsmanship, with Baroque furniture, paintings and sculpture, and with such colour that there is a temptation (to which many writers have succumbed) to term it both gaudy and tasteless. Rubens himself, Jacob Jordaens, Gerard Seghers and Artus Quellin are among those represented, and the third ambulatory chapel marks the end of a Rubens pilgrimage, for here he lies below an altarpiece decorated with his own *Virgin and Child surrounded by Holy Personages*. Particularly notable are the carved stalls and other sculpture by the Quellin family, of whom Artus Quellin (1609-68) was the chief member; he worked in the Netherlands (on the Royal Palace of Amsterdam and the William of Orange monument at Delft, among other things) and in Germany, and his work is to be encountered almost everywhere in Belgium.

The one building that would truly have epitomized the work of Rubens and his colleagues, had it remained in pristine condition, is the Jesuit church of St. Charles Borromeo on the Hendrik Conscience Place, once among the world's richest churches. The entire circle, Van Dyck included, seems to have worked on this still magnificent church. Unfortunately it was burned out in 1718 and then refitted, and what remain of Rubens's altarpieces are now in Vienna, while the thirty-nine ceiling paintings commissioned from him in 1620 (to be delivered within a year) may now be seen only in watercolour reproductions by Jacques de Wit. Internally the walls are wainscoted with richly carved panelling and medallions, surmounted with paintings framed by Baroque cartouches and garlands, the whole broken by caryatid

confessionals engaged at regular intervals. This is largely the work of the eighteenth-century Antwerp architect J. P. van Baurscheit, but it seems to follow the lines of the original, the work of Seghers in particular. Daniel Seghers (1590–1661) was a pupil of his father and later of Jan Breughel the Elder, and in 1614 he became a laybrother in the Society of Jesus. He frequently painted garlands and borders of flowers around paintings by his friend Rubens, but little enough remains of his work in Antwerp beyond a few small works in the museums—a painting of St. Theresa, a garland of flowers surrounding a bust of St. Ignatius by Cornelius Schut, etc.

The Baroque in Europe was almost entirely a product of the Jesuit Counter-Reformation—even in Poland the first Baroque building was the Jesuit Church of Nieswiez (1584)—and in Belgium, where it came rather later, the seventeenth century was the age of the Baroque churches of Pieter Huyssens, Guillaume Hessius, Luc Faydherbe, Jacques Franquart, Jean van den Eynde and Wenceslaus Cobergher, all of which derived from Giacomo Vignola's Church of the Gesù in Rome. It is a sober, dignified and restrained Baroque, lacking the originality of the Spanish, and certainly not indulging in the fanciful flights of the later German and Austrian products. It is not always successful, but it is almost always sincere, emotional yet academic, and may be held truly to express the Jesuit outlook of the period. The Baroque is largely dependent upon sculpture, and it is significant that most of these architects were primarily sculptors or at least worked in both mediums with equal facility.

Of the Jesuit architects who moved in the Rubens circle none was more talented than Pieter Huyssens (1577–1637), the son of a Bruges mason. He studied architecture in Italy under the patronage of the Archduke Albert and his duchess Isabella, and in 1598 he became a laybrother in the Society of Jesus. His first major work would appear to be the Jesuit church of St. Charles Borromeo in Antwerp, originally dedicated to St. Ignatius, begun in 1614 and completed in 1617–21. In this he was assisted by Fr. Aiguillon, a Jesuit of the Antwerp community and a friend of Rubens, and it is clear that Rubens himself had a hand in the general conception. It is undoubtedly Huyssens's best work and is among the most successful and ambitious churches of the period, a highly festive design having a somewhat extravagant

roof-line featuring flambeaux and cupolas like miniature pavilions, while the ornate tower set behind the building is a *tour de force*.

Despite the disparity in the official dates it is probable that the former Jesuit church of St. Walburge in Bruges was Huyssens's first work, since he was a member of that community. Begun in 1619, though completion was delayed until 1641, this is among his more sober works, with a suggestion of lingering Gothic in the vaulting. His church of St. Loup in Namur, built for the Jesuits in 1621-45, is in much the same idiom except for the singular ceiling, which has that exuberance of painting and sculpture which is the hall-mark of Jesuit decoration, and which moved Baudelaire to write of this "*merveille sinistre et galante, l'intérieur d'un catafalque, terrible et délicieux, brodé de noir, de rose et d'argent.* . . ." In Ghent his church of St. Pierre, begun in 1629, suffers from a congested environment and from later alterations, the choir being enclosed in Louis XV wrought-ironwork. All these churches, with others such as that at Maastricht (which in 1939 was in permanent use as a theatre), are in the Baroque, but it is by St. Charles Borromeo that he should be judged.

After the Antwerp church the most ambitious design in Jesuit Baroque is that of St. Michel in Louvain, built in 1650-66, and badly damaged in the last war. The architect was Guillaume Hessius, a member of the Louvain community of the Society of Jesus, and not Luc Faydherbe as is sometimes claimed, and the elaborate façade obviously owes something to St. Charles Borromeo. Another architect in the Rubens circle was Jacques Franquart (1577-1651), who was also painter, poet and mathematician, and who published books of engravings of monuments and armorial tablets. He early studied in Italy and returned to establish the new art forms with the encouragement of Rubens. He became architect to the Archduke Albert, and was created a chevalier by Philip III. Among his works are the Jesuit Church of Brussels, begun in 1606, one of the earliest Baroque buildings in Belgium, and the Béguinage Church of Malines, begun in 1629.

Wenceslaus Cobergher (c. 1560-1634) was another architect who hovered on the fringe of the circle. He worked in Antwerp, Paris and Italy, designed the Hôtel de Ville of Ath in Hainault, and was responsible for all the *monts-de-piété* (municipal pawn-

shops) built in Belgium during the archducal period. His most celebrated church is that of Montaigu, an early Baroque example of 1609-27 which is a departure from the norm, and which, with its domed circular plan, seems to be a return to Michelangelo and Bramante, though too ponderous truly to be identified with their work. Finally, mention must be made of Luc Faydherbe (1617-97), the principal artist in a Malines family of six sculptors, of whom two were women. He was equally active as architect and sculptor, and he designed many Baroque churches, notably in Malines, including the Béguinage Church of Brussels, in addition to the Hôtel de Ville of St. Nicholas, and numerous sculptures such as the altarpiece in the Rubens mortuary chapel in Antwerp. Faydherbe's designs for the Norbertine abbey church of Averbode were rejected in favour of those by Jean van den Eynde, an architect and sculptor of Antwerp. This church, built in 1664-72, is internally one of the most dynamic and festive designs in the country.

The influence of Rubens and his circle in the Baroque world may not yet have been wholly assessed. In Spain, for example, it would appear that José de Churriguera, who is now regarded as the scapegoat of Spanish Baroque, was influenced by Rubens's paintings and tapestry cartoons in the royal collections, particularly in the use of twisted columns, though in the main it was Bernini's influence that counted here. It cannot be said, however, that all Rubens's ceiling decorations were perfectly designed, for the canvases of the Whitehall Banqueting Hall, which had to be mutilated before fitting, have errors of perspective when seen from below. Yet he was something of a pioneer in this field, and it was not until half a century after his death that a Spanish Jesuit, Fr. Pozzo, discovered the secret of constructing an architectural illusion on a ceiling, thus belatedly bringing the Baroque to perfection.

## THE 'MOTU PROPRIO' OF PIUS X AND THE MODERN COMPOSER

FIFTY YEARS AGO, on 22nd November, 1903, the Feast of St. Cecilia, Pope Pius X issued his famous instruction on liturgical music. The fact that this detailed and carefully thought-out document was issued in the first year of his pontificate is some evidence of the importance he attached to it. His Holiness, who had "excellent taste and entertained marked preference for the best style of musical composition, whether sacred or profane,"<sup>1</sup> and who as Patriarch of Venice had established many reforms already in his own diocese, was acutely disturbed by the corrupt practices which prevailed almost universally:

. . . whether it is owing to the very nature of this art, fluctuating and variable as it is in itself, or to the succeeding changes in tastes and habits with the course of time, or to the fatal influence exercised on sacred art by profane and theatrical art, or to the pleasure that music directly produces, and that is not always easily contained within the right limits, or finally to the many prejudices on the matter, so lightly introduced and so tenaciously maintained even among many responsible and pious persons, the fact remains that there is a general tendency to deviate from the right rule, prescribed by the end for which art is admitted to the service of public worship and which is set forth very clearly in the ecclesiastical Canons, in the Ordinances of the general and provincial Councils, in the prescriptions which have at various times emanated from the Sacred Roman Congregations, and from Our Predecessors the Sovereign Pontiffs.<sup>2</sup>

The Pope was insisting on a return to a purer, more ancient and authentic tradition of church music which, though in general disregard, was nevertheless commanded by long-honoured rules of the Church. His sole purpose in issuing the *Motu Proprio* was to recall these rules, to ratify them, and to demonstrate beyond any doubt what was the official view of the Church on sacred music. Let there be no doubt that it was not just a matter of personal opinion:

. . . in order that no one for the future may be able to plead in excuse that he did not clearly understand his duty, and that all vagueness may be eliminated from the interpretation of matters

<sup>1</sup> *Memories of Pope Pius X*, by Cardinal Merry del Val (Burns and Oates), p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> *Motu Proprio*. Printed in *Catholic Church Music—the legislation of Pius X, Benedict XV and Pius XI* (Burns and Oates), p. 2.

which have already been commanded, We have deemed it expedient to point out briefly the principles regulating sacred music in the functions of public worship, and to gather together in a general survey the principles of the Church against the more common abuses in this subject. We do therefore publish, *motu proprio* and with certain knowledge, Our present Instruction, to which . . . We will with the fullness of Our Apostolic Authority that the force of law be given, and We do by Our present handwriting impose its scrupulous observance on all.<sup>1</sup>

The instruction was not, however, a purely negative attack on abuses: behind it lay a lofty conception of the *purpose* of music allied to the liturgy. Nor was it just a series of detailed regulations, for it was all based on a thoughtful presentation of the age-old principles which govern sacred music. As such it is a document of peculiar importance to the modern composer of liturgical music.

It is too easily and too frequently assumed that, with the vast corpus of suitable and great liturgical music collected by the Church throughout the ages, modern compositions are not a necessity and are best avoided. This was not a view shared by Pius X, who pointed out that

. . . the Church has always recognized and favoured the progress of the arts, admitting to the service of the cult everything good and beautiful discovered by genius in the course of the ages—always, however, with due regard to the liturgical laws. Consequently modern music is also admitted in the Church, since it, too, furnishes compositions of such excellence, sobriety, and gravity, that they are in no way unworthy of the liturgical functions.<sup>2</sup>

A vital tradition of religious art has always been a symptom of a living faith: there is something radically wrong with a Christian society in which the Church makes no use of its artists or in which the artists feel no call to offer their services to the Church. In many ways, indeed, and not least in the self-discipline for which it calls, the *Motu Proprio* presents a peculiar challenge to the contemporary composer. But, with the growth of false theories of art and with the modern collapse of artistic traditions clearly expressed in the self-conscious cult of individualistic styles, this lucid exposition of the principles of liturgical music together with the noble tradition of ancient liturgical art to which it refers, provides the roots which modern art so conspicuously lacks.

The Pope opens with an observation which at first glance appears to be a somewhat conventional and pious platitude, but later is discovered

<sup>1</sup> *Motu Proprio*, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Motu Proprio*, op. cit., p. 6.

to be loaded with meaning: "Sacred music, being a complementary part of the solemn liturgy, participates in the general scope of the liturgy, which is the glory of God and the sanctification and edification of the faithful."<sup>1</sup> The first point, that music itself praises God, is inclined to be overlooked in favour of its influence upon us. But liturgical art is not just an inducement to prayer, it is itself an expression of prayer. Thus, just as we do not deliberately present the Divine Majesty with imperfect prayers, so we should not deliberately dedicate to His service imperfect works of art. But perfection of work, a sincere whole-hearted giving of self is demanded not only from liturgical artists but from all artists and indeed from all Christian people.

Who sweeps a room as for Thy sake  
Makes that and the action fine.

It is in this sense that "Everything, sacred and profane, belongs to it [Christian art]. It is at home in the whole range of man's industry and joy. Symphony or ballet, film or novel, landscape or still-life, vaudeville or opera, it can be as apparent in them all as in the stained-glass windows and statues of our churches."<sup>2</sup>

Intrinsic worthiness, then, is one qualification, but not a sole qualification for liturgical music. There is also the difficult but important condition that it should tend to the "sanctification and edification of the faithful." Like all liturgical art it must deliberately aim at making contact with ordinary people, so that "through it the faithful may be the more easily moved to devotion and better disposed for the reception of the fruits of grace belonging to the celebration of the most holy mysteries."<sup>3</sup> Liturgical art, emphasized Maritain, "must be intelligible. For it is there above all for the instruction of the people, it is a theology in graphic representation. An unintelligible, obscure, Mallarméan religious art is about as absurd as a house without a staircase or a cathedral without a porch."<sup>4</sup> Such an attitude is not sympathetic to the esoteric cliques of modern art.

But there is yet another condition, for not only must liturgical art make contact, it must also do so in a way which avoids secular associations. Liturgical compositions must be "free from reminiscences of motifs adopted in the theatres, and be not fashioned even in their external forms after the manner of profane pieces."<sup>5</sup> This was precisely the cause of so many abuses: the Pope made no comment on the

<sup>1</sup> *Motu Proprio*, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Art and Scholasticism with Other Essays*, by Jacques Maritain (Sheed and Ward), p. 68.

<sup>4</sup> *Art and Scholasticism*, op. cit., p. 144.

<sup>3</sup> *Motu Proprio*, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> *Motu Proprio*, op. cit., p. 6.

purely *artistic* value of the works he was forbidding to be used in church. Indeed, in the sense that "everything, sacred and profane, belongs to it," these were often valid works of Christian art. They did not, however, tend to the sanctification of the faithful. The secular associations of today are rather different. The trouble with so many eighteenth and nineteenth century Masses was that their composers used exactly the same style for them as they used for their operas and theatrical works. The modern equivalent might be a Mass in the style of *Guys and Dolls*. We do not stand in grave danger of this; but the extreme individuality of style which is so carefully cultivated and prized by contemporary composers (compare the distinctive idioms of Britten, Schoenberg and Bartok, for example), indeed by modern artists in general, *does* represent a new problem, for it, too, can represent secular and distracting associations. To some extent, then, the modern composer of liturgical music must be prepared to submerge his personality. Yet it was certainly not the aim of the *Motu Proprio* to encourage characterless music or to repress personality provided it was contained within proper limits. The Pope recognized the value of national characteristics, and what he had to say on this point can easily be adapted to the individual characteristics of modern composers:

Church music must be universal in the sense that while every nation is permitted to admit into its ecclesiastical compositions those special forms which may be said to constitute its native music, still these forms must be subordinated in such a manner to the general characteristics of sacred music that nobody of any nation may receive an impression other than good on hearing them.<sup>1</sup>

The characteristics of liturgical music therefore are that by artistic standards alone it is worthy and "true" art as the Pope put it; that it avoids purely secular associations; that it aims at a universal significance and intelligibility—as befits the Catholic Church; and that it helps to impress the full import of the sacred texts. These characteristics, the Pope pointed out,

are to be found, in the highest degree, in the Gregorian Chant, which is, consequently, the chant proper to the Roman Church, the only chant she has inherited from the ancient fathers, which she has jealously guarded for centuries in her liturgical codices, which she directly proposes to the faithful as her own, which she prescribes exclusively for some parts of the liturgy, and which the most recent studies<sup>2</sup> have so happily restored to its integrity and purity.

<sup>1</sup> *Motu Proprio*, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> By the Benedictine monks of Solesmes.

On these grounds the Gregorian Chant has always been regarded as the supreme model for sacred music, so that it is fully legitimate to lay down the following rule; *the more closely a composition for church approaches in its movement, inspiration, and savour the Gregorian form, the more sacred and liturgical it becomes; and the more out of harmony it is with that supreme model, the less worthy is it of the temple.*<sup>1</sup>

But in spite of the pre-eminence of Gregorian Chant, which is such that "an ecclesiastical function loses nothing of its solemnity when it is accompanied by no other music," the Pope also recommended the use of "the classic polyphony, especially of the Roman school," and in particular the music of Palestrina, its foremost composer.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Henry Coates, in his admirable study of Palestrina, points out what it is in his work that agrees so well with the characteristics of Gregorian Chant:

Palestrina's liturgical music neither represents the composer's personal reaction to the emotional idea of the sacred texts nor provides a "ready-made" emotion for the listener. It has a rare quality, its aim being to evoke and develop the requisite mood in the worshipper . . . it may be regarded as merely a receptacle for the sacred text upon which all the art of the musical craftsman has been lavished for its adornment. All is intended to aid corporate worship: thus the music was composed as part of the services, not for them. It is this impersonal quality, this aloofness from the human element which gives to such music its mystic atmosphere, its sense of remoteness, of something timeless and ageless, ideal qualities from the liturgical point of view.<sup>3</sup>

It is interesting that, although the classic polyphony had its roots historically in the Gregorian Chant, by the time of Palestrina the relationship between the two was much more one of spiritual rather than of mere technical affinity. The same kind of relationship connects many modern English liturgical composers with their Tudor predecessors. For although Palestrina was the only composer to be mentioned by name in the *Motu Proprio*, there were many others, not only in Italy but also in Spain, the Netherlands and in England, who wrote liturgical music of the very highest order. It was not such because of any emasculated or unnatural restraint: indeed, the rapturous mysticism of Vittoria in Spain, and the restrained but intense drama of Byrd in England could only have been achieved by the prayerful dedication of complete and rich musical personalities. This

<sup>1</sup> *Motu Proprio*, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> See the letter of Benedict XV to Cardinal Vannutelli, *Catholic Church Music*, op. cit., p. 35.

<sup>3</sup> *Palestrina*, by Henry Coates (Dent), pp. 82-3.

attitude was well expressed by William Byrd himself (who, though organist of Lincoln Cathedral and later of the Chapel Royal under Elizabeth never failed in his lifelong devotion to the Catholic Church) when he wrote in his dedication to the first book of his *Gradualia*:

... ita profecto, Sacris sententiis, quibus Dei ipsius, caelestiumque Civium, laudes decantantur, nulla nisi caelestis (quantum eniti possumus) harmonia conveniat. Porro, illis ipsis sententiis (ut experiendo didici) adeo abstrusa atque recondita vis inest, ut divina cogitanti, diligenterque ac serio per volutanti, nescio quonam modo, aptissimi quique numeri, quas sponte accurrant sua, animoque minime ignavo atque inerti, liberaliter ipsi sese offerant.

The renewed interest in Tudor composers at the beginning of the century was largely due to Sir Richard Terry, Director of Music at Westminster Cathedral from 1902–24. Even before he went to Westminster Cathedral, Terry, as organist of Downside Abbey, had been faithfully following the precepts that were later to be expressed in the *Motu Proprio*; and at last, after centuries, the great liturgical music of the sixteenth century was being taken back into regular use again. His enthusiasm for Palestrina and the other composers of the Roman school was only equalled by his very natural devotion to English composers of the same period.<sup>1</sup> At Westminster, Terry established an impeccable and perhaps unique tradition of liturgical music which attracted the attention of musicians of all denominations. Interest in sixteenth century techniques of composition was rapidly growing, and they were beginning to displace purely arbitrary and theoretical methods of instruction in the schools of music and in the Universities: all this, again, was largely owing to the influence of Terry. Indeed, under him Westminster Cathedral was musically quite the most interesting church in the country.

It was not the least sign of Terry's greatness of vision that he not only restored to performance ancient schools of liturgical music, but longed for another in the present; and not the least sign of his success and influence at Westminster was that he came near to establishing one. In 1919 he wrote: "Hardly less important than the revival of old English music is the fact that the Cathedral services are creating a new school of church music by living English composers, writing in modern idiom, but in the spirit of the old masters and with the same restraint."<sup>2</sup> Of the many composers who responded to the

<sup>1</sup> He was the first editor of the vast Carnegie Trust edition of Tudor Church Music.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in *Westminster Retrospect—a memoir of Sir Richard Terry*, by Hilda Andrews (Oxford University Press), p. 133.

inspiration of Terry (including men of the stature of Sir Charles Stanford, Gustav Holst, Dr. Vaughan Williams, Dr. Charles Wood, Dr. Herbert Howells) few, of course, were Catholics:<sup>1</sup> yet their works are amongst the noblest and most suitable liturgical compositions since the *Motu Proprio*. It was a time when the possibility of English music was still an exciting discovery, when composers were looking for a genuine native tradition in folk-song and in the golden ages of English composition. Terry's practical demonstration of our great heritage of church music was a living inspiration, and the influence of the old music on them all was conspicuous, "not in the sense of a borrowed idiom, but in the sense of a liturgical and spiritual grandeur . . . apprehended for the first time."<sup>2</sup>

In this sense, one of the greatest of these works, Vaughan Williams's Mass in G minor,<sup>3</sup> is typical. When Terry first saw the score he wrote to the composer: "I'm quite sincere when I say that it is the work one has all along been waiting for. In your modern and individual idiom you have really captured the old liturgical spirit and atmosphere." It was not just an imitation of Palestrina or Byrd: such might be a good fake but not great music. Yet all the qualities which make the Palestrina and Byrd Masses so liturgically apt are to be found in the Vaughan Williams Mass.

From a technical point of view one of its most interesting features is its rhythmic freedom, for it is nearer the free rhythms of plainsong than the square-cut rhythms of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. (An example is the opening phrase of the Kyrie which, in its melodic as well as in its rhythmic structure is very reminiscent of Gregorian Chant.) Conventionalism in rhythm is one of the features which vitiates much second-rate modern church music (including that of some very celebrated Italian masters), though it was a point specifically mentioned by Pius X.<sup>4</sup> The best English liturgical music, however, has been free from it: three recent Masses—Edmund Rubbra's *Missa in Honorem Sancti Dominici*,<sup>5</sup> Julius Harrison's *Missa Liturgica*<sup>6</sup> and Anthony Milner's *Mass for Unaccompanied Choir*—are conspicuous examples.

One cannot help being very conscious that these works are much more familiar in the concert hall than in church, and this is a serious and lamentable state of affairs. (It is even a mistake of aesthetics.)

<sup>1</sup> It is a curious fact that Sir Edward Elgar, a Catholic, produced very little liturgical music, and that the little he did was far from being his best work.

<sup>2</sup> *Westminster Retrospect*, op. cit., p. 132.

<sup>3</sup> Published by Curwen and Sons, Ltd. Parts of it were performed in an English translation at the Coronation of H.M. Queen Elizabeth II.

<sup>4</sup> *Motu Proprio*, op. cit., p. 6.      <sup>5</sup> Published by Lengnick and Co., Ltd.

<sup>6</sup> Also published by Lengnick and Co., Ltd.

"Beauty must be seen where the artist has chosen to put it," said Delacroix. A critic could say of the Vaughan Williams Mass, for example, that "the quality of this work may perhaps only be appreciated where its liturgical significance is properly displayed."<sup>1</sup> Terry's policy of enthusiastically encouraging modern native liturgical music died with him. Much of the music written for him, and a fair proportion of the small amount written since his death, remains unpublished: clear proof, if any were needed, of how apathetic we are about our own composers. Some of this music, of course, is too complex for the average amateur choir; but not all—the extremely effective four-part Harrison Mass, for example, is of only average difficulty. When the music is more elaborate (as in the Vaughan Williams Mass, or in his fine motet *O Vos Omnes* for Tenebrae on the eve of Holy Saturday) it is usually because it was written specially for Terry's highly accomplished choir at Westminster, or because composers have despaired from the start of ever hearing their works performed in the surroundings for which they intended them. It is not to be doubted that, if there were a real demand for good and simple music, it would be forthcoming from both composers and publishers. But let us not be patronizing about this. If the demand does *not* come it will be *our* great loss, and that of succeeding generations, since not for centuries has English composition reached its present level and world-wide importance.

The question of the influence of the *Motu Proprio* on parish church music up and down the country has not yet been touched on, though it is very relevant to the modern composer. Pius X foresaw opposition to his commands, attempts at evasion: twenty years after their enactment Terry was fulminating that in many respects they were still being disregarded. Looking round at the general level of music in our churches we can even now feel no cause for satisfaction. Ours is no longer an underground Church, a persecuted "Irish colony"; it is the Universal Church in England, the ancient faith of this land flourishing openly once more: and its music is not worthy of it.<sup>2</sup> There are many difficulties: difficulties of finding singers and competent musicians to train them, difficulties of buying good music, difficulties of contending with those who would rather be diverted than uplifted during the sacred ceremonies, but no difficulties greater than those presented by a sheer indifference to the music of the Church, the "handmaid of the liturgy." The musical health of the Church is not registered by a few cathedrals and prominent churches, but by the

<sup>1</sup> *Vaughan Williams*, by Percy M. Young (Dennis Dobson Ltd.), p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> Though conditions elsewhere in the world do not seem to be much better See, for example, the very thoughtful articles in *Chant Sacré* (*L'Art Sacré* Nouvelle Série 6-7, Juin-Juillet 1947, Editions du Cerf, Paris).

ordinary parish churches. It is largely because the Anglican Church has this kind of health that it continues to produce, amongst much that is mediocre, excellent music for its own liturgy. And perhaps the greatest secret of the success of its parish church choirs has been that, at whatever level of technical competence they may be, they have aimed at doing good music which is well within their powers, and of doing it to the best of their ability.<sup>1</sup> For it cannot be too frequently or firmly emphasized that in all the arts there is no equation whatsoever between quality and complexity, difficulty, or magnitude. Though it is now fifty years old, the *Motu Proprio* of Pius X is still presenting a challenge to us: when we accept it warmly, when we think about it and are moved by its inspiration, when the music of *all* our churches, however simple, is worthy and worthily performed,—then we shall earnestly desire a new golden age of English liturgical music, and it will be not the least of our rewards.

ERIC TAYLOR

## REVIEWS

### HOPKINS'S HARVEST-HOME

*A Hopkins Reader*, edited by John Pick (Oxford University Press 21s). *Selected Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, edited by James Reeves (Heinemann 6s).

WRITING IN 1881 TO R. W. DIXON, who was eager to see Hopkins the poet in print, the latter said: "You can see what is against me, but since, as Solomon says, there is a time for everything . . . it may be that the time will come for my verses."

Never has a quiet and apparently "desperate" faith been more remarkably justified. Since their first collected publication in 1918, Hopkins's *Poems* have gone into three editions and fifteen impressions, and now the time has come for cheap issues and "Selections." Here,

<sup>1</sup> The Report of the Archbishops' Committee, *Music in Worship* (S.P.C.K.), p. 13, for example, when discussing music in village churches, says, "Gradually but decidedly a strong conviction has arisen that an absolute distinction must be made between the service which is suitable for the cathedrals, and that which is suitable for this type of parish church. A village service on simple lines can be splendid and uplifting; it can, in its own way, reach quite as high a level, musically and artistically, as well as devotionally, as in another way is reached by a large town church."

in the literary sense, is the seal of his "seraph-arrival"; he is among the stars, and "withindoors house/The shocks."

Dr. Pick, who is already known for his excellent short biography of the poet, has gathered into *A Hopkins Reader* thirty-three of the best poems (without notes, for which the reader is referred to the full Third Edition, 1948) and 264 pages of prose judiciously selected from the diaries, journal, letters, sermons, and commentaries. All the letters, sermons, and essays are complete wholes, and the various items are arranged under such headings as "Observations of Nature: Inscape," "Poetic Theory," "Practical Criticism," "Personal Letters," and "Religion." The editor admits that this classification is "rough," and anyone wanting to glean all the sayings on, say, "Poetic Theory," will have to peruse the other categories as well; but the scheme will undoubtedly be helpful to students. Reproductions of Hopkins's drawings are included, with a few necessary notes to the prose, while the whole selection is introduced by a valuable biographical and appreciative essay and rounded off with a comprehensive index.

Mr. Reeves's "first cheap edition" of the mature poems (together with two early pieces and four fragments) is also a book which will be welcomed by student and general reader alike. It contains a stimulating but somewhat unbalanced Introduction, and nineteen pages of simple but useful notes. These often include short summaries or paraphrases, most of which are sound and sensitive guides to the central meaning of a poem, but some of which (*e.g.*, those on "The Windhover" and "The Soldier") tend to distort by over-simplification. One novelty in the presentation of the text must be briefly examined. In his Preface Mr. Reeves says that he has "omitted all accents marking stresses," because he believes that "these stress marks have acted as a deterrent to the general appreciation of Hopkins's poems." Now it is true that Hopkins himself thought these marks "offensive"; but he also felt strongly that *some* marks were necessary to prevent misunderstanding of his rhythmical intentions; and I doubt whether Mr. Reeves is right in asserting that modern readers are now so accustomed to "accentual verse" that "marks may now be considered an unnecessary blemish." Impatient with the "jargon" of prosody, Mr. Reeves also omits Hopkins's own "Preface" on the nature of Counterpoint and Sprung Rhythms.

The plain fact is that Hopkins was *not* writing modern "free" verse. His poems were written "altogether for performance" (like music); his rhythms were "carefully calculated" according to what he called an unusually "strict" prosodic system; hence the few stress-marks included in the collected *Poems* by Robert Bridges and later editors do serve to remind the reader that Sprung Rhythm admits sensitively

placed monosyllabic feet and nicely calculated "paeons"; many stresses also serve to remind us that an "outride" is always preceded by a "great stress" and followed by a short pause. Of Sprung Rhythm Hopkins said, "Stress is the life of it"—by which he meant, of course, the right pitch of stress on the right syllables. Most modern poets who eschew the regular metres do not work to any clearly defined prosodic system. But Hopkins did; and the great difference in formal precision should not be ignored. Mr. Reeves is perhaps justified in saying, typographically, that the stress marks are not absolutely indispensable: the poetry is always there, in the words themselves, even though it may be dulled or distorted by a false "ear" reading. Yet all serious readers of this poet will want to be helped to his full and precise meaning by knowing, as far as possible, how he intended his lines to be read. That is why a few printed stress marks are still useful, and why most of the "outrides," which as integral parts of a poem were carefully marked in the MSS. and which clearly indicate certain stressed syllables and pauses, should be included somewhere in any true "edition"—preferably in the notes.

It is even more interesting and necessary to compare and contrast Dr. Pick's Introduction with that of Mr. Reeves. Both are copiously illustrated by apt quotation, but in tone they differ markedly. That of Dr. Pick shows a deeper understanding of Hopkins's religious background and (particularly) of his position as a Jesuit. The *Reader* is apparently intended for use in Catholic schools and colleges, where the basic beliefs are accepted and approved; hence Dr. Pick feels no need to examine the truth or falsity of what Mr. Reeves calls "the extreme rationalistic-aesthetic view on the one hand and the extreme Jesuit view on the other." Dr. Pick hardly admits the presence, in Hopkins, of a submerged conflict leading to the tragic frustration of the creative artist, and he certainly does not imply that on the whole it was a pity that Hopkins ever became a Jesuit. Mr. Reeves, on the other hand, does attempt to examine very closely the pros and cons of the "deplorable frustration" argument, but the resulting statements are often contradictory. He admits that Hopkins's self-dedication to the Jesuit discipline was voluntary and therefore all the more "noble," but the implications are that it was inexplicable and wasteful; he does not bring forward with any understanding or perspicuity the arguments which Hopkins himself frequently enunciated in his letters and retreat notes—arguments which reveal to us, unconsciously but overwhelmingly, the great spiritual value of this poet-priest's renunciation of the full creative life to which his poetic gift, though not his health or temperament, seemed to entitle him. Mr. Reeves allows that many of Hopkins's greatest poems spring from his apprehension of God in creation, but the next minute he speaks of the poet's decision to put

Religion before Art, his religious vocation before his poet-vocation, as a circumstance which "maimed his genius"—as though this asceticism had not been proved, by his very poetry, to be an essential *part* of his genius. According to Mr. Reeves, "Art and Religion were never reconciled," even though "some at least of his finest poems are the result of this process of self-destruction." But what about "The Wreck of the Deutschland," "God's Grandeur," "The Windhover," "Hurrahing in Harvest," "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves," etc.? If these poems do not reconcile Art and Religion in the sense that Art becomes the perfect medium for the religious experience, then they are not true poems at all but abortions. Again, we are told that "Hopkins's Muse was never converted"—which probably means that Hopkins always had scruples of conscience against the writing of poetry, which he considered "unprofessional"; but in view of the fact that after writing "The Deutschland" he considered himself "free to write" any poetry which would be in harmony with his religion (and who could conceive him writing any other kind?), Mr. Reeves's epigram is misleading: it suggests that his poetic faculty could operate with success only when his religious experience *as a Catholic* was not the main theme. But this is an unwarrantable paradox, as the critic himself seems to recognize when he quotes, with complete approval, Dr. F. R. Leavis:

Hopkins's genius was as much a matter of rare character, intelligence and sincerity as of technical skill; indeed, in his great poetry the distinction disappears; the technical triumph is a triumph of spirit.

Now Hopkins's rare "character" and "sincerity" were moulded and confirmed by his Catholic faith and Jesuit training (before becoming a Jesuit, says Mr. Reeves, he had been conceited and somewhat priggish); hence his artistic triumph was a triumph of the whole personality, including the religious consciousness. Mr. Reeves should have insisted, with a more lucid subtlety, on the remarkable way in which "self-destruction" contributed to the self-fulfilment, the ultimate triumph of spirit.

"His life," says Mr. Reeves, "was dedicated to God, but many of his poems he must have dedicated, in his heart, to his Muse or to posterity." Such a distinction, which impugns his sincerity, Hopkins's "heart" would never have made. There is a more essential relevance and truth in his own words of comfort to the disappointed poet in Canon Dixon:

The only just judge, the only just literary critic, is Christ, who prizes, is proud of, and admires more than any man, more than the receiver himself can, the gifts of his own making.

What *real* place has "the Muse," a mere figure of speech, in this scheme of things?

Mr. Reeves rightly stresses, but wrongly *overstresses*, the "privations and hardships" of Hopkins's life as a Jesuit. He consequently underrates the effects of the poet's *lifelong* physical weakness, his *innate* scrupulosity, the *self-made* difficulty of his mature poetic style, the dissipation of his energies (e.g., in letter-writing, criticism and music), and his natural incapacity for sustained literary creation. It is the great power coming only in short jets which gives the rare intensity; it is the concentration of power in a few poems which gives, ultimately, the diamond-hard brilliance and durability. Mr. Reeves implies that Hopkins's choice of the Jesuit profession was regrettable; but for my part he may keep all the poems that this Jesuit did not write, poems that he *might* have written—to the immense gratification of some pagan "Muse." I prefer to err in contentment with Dr. Pick, who concludes his Introduction with some illuminating words:

In all things he took as his model Christ, whose life was "doomed to succeed by failure." At no place does he state so clearly his ideal as when he wrote:

"This is that chastity of mind which seems to lie at the heart and be the parent of all other good, the seeing at once what is best, the holding to that, and not allowing anything else whatever to be even heard pleading to the contrary."

Finally, it is worth reflecting that such renunciations as Hopkins made derive from, and give additional validity to, that Christian ethic and universal *mystique* which underlie much great religious poetry besides his own. The values he asserted increase and strengthen the significance of Dante, St. John of the Cross, Donne, and Mr. T. S. Eliot.

W. H. GARDNER

#### STUDIES IN ST. BERNARD

*Bernard de Clairvaux* (Editions Alsatia, Paris. 3,000 francs).

ONE OF THE MOST STRIKING FEATURES in the external development of the Church since 1945 has been the expansion of the Cistercian Order, particularly in its branch of the Strict Observance. Not only in France and Spain, but in the British Isles, the United States, Canada and elsewhere the growth has been remarkable. Less important, but none the less interesting, has been the rise, especially among the Cistercians of French speech, of a school of historical scholarship, devoted to the history of the Order and finding expression in a number of weighty serial publications.

It had long been common knowledge that the Commission d'Histoire de l'Ordre de Cîteaux was preparing to mark the eighth centenary of the death of St. Bernard with studies of importance; for several years preparations have been in train for a critical edition of the works of the saint and for a definitive Life. No one with a knowledge of the difficulties in the way of these enterprises seriously expected publication in 1953. The volume under review, though contributing precious material (and some new problems) for the biographer, is of a totally different character. It is a collection of studies covering many aspects of Bernard's life and activities; it runs to 750 pages of close (and at times very close) print, and the English reader will probably feel that the editor's confidence that the work has struck the happy mean between a popular and a scientific treatment does less than justice to the solidity of the fare provided. Even so, the book is not as comprehensive as its designer intended. Death, illness and defaulting have caused gaps, and it so happens that the casualties have been particularly severe among those who were to treat of the inner life of Bernard. Nevertheless, the volume is a weighty effort of co-operative scholarship, and it will set one more hurdle in the exhausting path that lies before would-be Bernardine students.

The chapters in the book are marshalled in five groups, but in fact the first three groups form something of a unit. Thus regarded, Chapters I-IX are critical studies of Bernard's origin, of Clairvaux and its first years, and of other topics of early Cistercian history; Chapters XI-XXIV treat of the relations of Bernard with other orders and the various classes of contemporary society; and Chapters XXV-XXVIII, which have little connection with each other, include two of the longest and most interesting in the book.

For these twenty-eight chapters the editor, Fr. Jean de la Croix Bouton, of Aiguebelle, has mobilized some fifteen collaborators. A few of these, such as the late Augustin Fliche and the dynamic Dom Jean Leclercq, bear familiar names; others, doubtless of repute in their own country, are less well known to English readers; it is noteworthy that only two besides the editor are white monks.

Speaking very summarily, we may say that the first group of chapters is at once the most difficult to read and the most valuable for future scholars; only a specialist could check the multifarious details of chronology and genealogy, but if, as is no doubt the case, the work is accurate it will not need to be done again *in extenso*. The second group is less easy to assess: such studies must necessarily form part of any life of St. Bernard; much of what is here said may be found in Vacandard, and much will have to be rewritten in his own idiom by a future biographer. Two chapters will naturally attract the reader's attention: that of Fliche on Bernard's relations to the civil

society of his times, and that of M. André Seguin on the Second Crusade. Fliche's pages are somewhat disappointing; they were written shortly before his death and left unrevised, and the chapter as printed lacks firmness of grasp. The Second Crusade must always be the greatest problem that the biographer of Bernard has to face. M. Seguin, who writes more about the crusade than about Bernard, grasps the nettle firmly and in effect admits that the whole thing was a mistake (though, like other French mistakes, a glorious one) undertaken by Bernard in obedience to Eugenius III. This, it may be suggested, is not wholly satisfying. Difficult as the search may be, some way has to be found of reconciling the mature sanctity of Bernard and the thaumaturgical exuberance of his German tour with an unmitigated failure. Bernard's own explanation, which greatly resembles that of Moses under similar circumstances, may after all be the true one.

Perhaps the most stimulating chapter of the whole book is that by Fr. Irenée Vallery-Radot on the literary genius and humanism of Bernard. It is only recently that any recognition has been given to these two aspects of the saint, and this is the fullest study that has yet appeared; it is the work of one with a wide and sensitive knowledge of literature and art in all its forms, and will remain to challenge and inspire future critics. In the present writer's view, however, the description of Bernard's genius as lyrical and poetic, akin to that of the great Romantics, is, as a judgment of literary criticism, mistaken. Bernard, surely, is an orator, a propagandist, an advocate; his life, in the Keatsian antithesis, was one of "thoughts," not of "sensations"; or, to use Paul Claudel's terms, his words are those of *animus*, not of *anima*. The effect he produces, the allusions he makes, can always, with industry, be analysed; they have none of the inexplicable beauty, the magic shock, of that "pure" poetry that ever eludes the grasp—"tis here, 'tis here, 'tis gone." This chapter is followed by another long and valuable discussion, this time of the Cistercian attitude to art, by M. H.-B. de Warren, who concludes that, while both the Cistercians and their adversaries were often misguided and ignorant, the Cistercian distrust of anything approaching to ornament or magnificence was not puritanism or philistinism, but the rejection of anything that might entangle the soul in its ascent to God—the active "night of the senses."

The chapters end on page 534; the remaining 200 pages are taken up with elaborate appendices and chronological and genealogical and analytic tables. These even the most optimistic editor could scarcely expect the general reader to regard as anything but caviare. Some, however, are of interest as well as of value. Appendix IV contains a list of Bernard's citations of profane authors; it is useful, but far from complete; thus only one citation from Cicero is given (M. Etienne

Gilson could supply others), and Lucan finds no entry, though Bernard's effective application of *magni nominis umbra* to the Holy Name is not his only memory of the *Pharsalia*. On the other hand, the occurrence of the commonplace *veste lacera* is scarcely sufficient to prove dependence on Tacitus, whose unique manuscript was buried in Germany throughout the Middle Ages.

Three general reflections occur on reaching the end of this volume. The first is the magnitude of the subject: these 750 pages leave practically untouched the doctrinal, mystical and ascetical teaching of Bernard, as well as his controversies with Abélard and Gilbert de la Porée. The second is that there has been a welcome revolution in the approach to the saint. The ferocious and persecuting puritan and the inhuman wonder-working ascetic are alike giving place to a sensitive, observant human being—almost a “humanist,” certainly an artist in language, appreciative of the beauty of nature as well as that of words. The third results from the two others: it is that the balanced, comprehensive picture that will show the saint, the artist and the human personality all together is yet to come. This impressive volume still leaves that task untouched. Unless the definitive Life, when it comes, can show us Bernard, and not his words and deeds only, it will not have given us the one thing necessary. It will only leave us, as this volume leaves us, admiring the industry and scholarship, but frustrated by a vast expense of words that describe the energy and activity emanating from a source that lies hidden behind an impenetrable veil.

DAVID KNOWLES

### LA BELLE ACARIE

*Barbe Acarie: Wife and Mystic*, by Lancelot Sheppard (Burns and Oates 16s).

**H**ABENT SUA FATA BEATAE! It has often been remarked that “la belle Acarie,” known throughout France and far beyond, and maybe the most striking figure in the world of Catholic women in the sixteenth century, underwent an almost total eclipse for over two hundred years, despite her beatification in 1791, and despite the new edition (1893) of her life by the theologian Duval, her contemporary. It is certain that it was Henri Bremond's great book (volumes two and three) that brought her once more to the attention of a multitude of readers, even though he may have erred in details and though his philosophy of prayer may be disputable. Anyhow, the definitive life, says Mr. Sheppard, is that by the discalced Carmelite, Fr. Bruno de Jésus-Marie. She lived from 1566 to 1618, and at sixteen her mother,

Mme. Avrillot, married her off to a Pierre Acarie, vicomte de Villemor and lord of many another estate. Happily the marriage turned out to be one truly of love as well as highly suitable, and there were six children. But when she was twenty-two her life began to be transformed. Without ceasing to be the perfect wife and mother, she began to lead the life of an ecstatic and for four years was in great anguish of doubt as to her spiritual state, but in no doubt at all as to her husband's and mother-in-law's disapproval of it. From her personal torments she was rescued by the Capuchin Benoît de Canfield (William Fitch, born at Canfield in Essex); but her home-life seemed destined to disaster since Pierre had not only been an energetic supporter of the anti-Huguenot League but had poured out his fortune upon it: so when Henri IV entered Paris, triumphant, in 1594, Pierre found himself not only exiled from the city, but ruined. Whereupon Mme Acarie, who had already worked marvels of organization during the terrible siege of Paris, now in extreme poverty set herself to disentangle the intricacies of Pierre's legal position: she paid off his debts and even his ransom, in the course of doing which she three times broke her hip-bone and remained a cripple, though as gay and practical as ever. Little by little, her house became the centre of an intense spiritual activity: Bérulle was constantly there; St. Vincent de Paul: St. Francis de Sales seemed almost so shy of her holiness that he shunned being her director. Her help was sought in all directions in the reform of monasteries—reform, that is, not from wickedness, but from frivolity and worldliness to a strict observance of the Rule, and in reality it is noticeable how strong a party in favour of strict reform existed in most of the greater convents. We have no room to describe the introduction of St. Teresa's Carmelites into France, a story almost as full of comedy as evidence for Barbe's surely supernatural clairvoyance into character. Mr. Sheppard interestingly tells us that all our Carmelite convents are ultimately due either to the Venerable Anne of Jesus—brought to France by Mme Acarie: alas, she detested the French and went off to the Low Countries—or, to the Paris convent founded by Mme Acarie herself. In 1613 Pierre Acarie died, having been lovingly nursed by his wife who herself was ill. Next year, she entered the Carmelite convent at Amiens but as a lay-sister and in 1615 was professed, though ill in bed. In 1616 a new prioress was to be elected: Barbe was chosen. She resisted desperately, and at a second election Anne de Viole, a "severe, unsmiling" person became prioress, and one of Barbe's own daughters, Marie de Jésus, sub-prioress, so that Barbe had to call her "mother," to Marie's great discomfort. But this was nothing compared to Bérulle's determination to obtain full control of the Carmelites and indeed wished in various ways to change their spirituality into something more like his own more complicated

system. But Barbe Acarie (now Sister Mary of the Incarnation and at Pontoise) could not admit that Teresians should be turned into Bérullians, and there was a truly tragic scene during which Bérulle attacked her with real "violence." Undoubtedly, despite her deep humility and resignation, this controversy hastened her death, which took place after much suffering on 18 April, 1618. Her beatification would doubtless have occurred earlier than 1791, had not her Cause been interrupted by Urban VIII's decree that no one should be beatified till fifty years after his or her death. This Life is of extreme interest and admirably written, and we would rejoice if a renewal of devotion to Mme Acarie (as we are sure to go on calling her) brought about her canonization. Few can have packed such a variety of experience into a brief fifty-two years!

C. C. MARTINDALE

### THE MIND OF ST. THOMAS

- The Platonic Heritage of Thomism*, by Arthur Little, S.J. (Golden Eagle, Dublin, 18s).  
*St. Thomas and the Existence of God*, by William Bryar (Regnery, Chicago, \$5.00).  
*St. Thomas Aquinas, a Biographical Study*, by A. Walz, O.P. (Newman, Westminster, Maryland, \$3.50).

FR. LITTLE'S BOOK, though the smallest of the three, is by far the most important. It is one of the very few original works on the metaphysics of St. Thomas to be written in English in this century, and one can only regret that the author, who corrected the proofs of this book on his deathbed, was not spared to give us more from the treasury of his mind. His theme is "a study of the Thomistic doctrine of participation with its consequences, and of its origin in the Platonic doctrine rejected by Aristotle." It is in God's very nature to exist, and all else apart from God is participated being, being that somehow falls off from the perfection of divine being. It is upon that "somehow" that the whole debate centres. Fr. Little contends that the notion of limit, whereby *this* created being is differentiated from *that* created being as by a passive potency, was St. Thomas's legacy from Plato which he put at the base of his real distinction in all created beings. He would not deny that Aquinas also used the other idea of composition, that of matter and form, which he derived from Aristotle, but holds that the Platonic notion is paramount in the Thomist system. It may be that Fr. Little neglected somewhat the mathematical side of Plato's thinking and was a bit too sanguine about the possibility of St. Thomas having knowledge of Plato's *Parmenides*, but his work abounds in

valuable ideas and his flashes of poetic phrase make the work a pleasure to read.

Mr. Bryar has attempted to put the First Way of Aquinas into the language (and symbols) of modern syllogistic, but it cannot be said that the attempt is really successful. The style seems borrowed from that of St. Thomas's commentaries on Aristotle, while the analyses of common propositions will hardly commend themselves either to a Thomist or to a devotee of the new syllogistic. There are many obscurities about the First Way (whether it be a proof of God's existence drawn from physical science or a metaphysical proof, for instance) but this book does not clear them up.

From Fr. Walz one may discover that Thomas was first imbued with a love of Aristotle by Petrus Hibernus at Naples, a fact that might have chagrined that other Irishman, Fr. Little. All the needful dates and places of the life, journeys and writings of St. Thomas are carefully ordered in this biography, though in the seven years since it was completed there have been revisions of judgment about the dating of some of the works, revisions which have not been noticed by the translator, Fr. Bullough. In particular, the dating of the commentary upon the *Ethics* of Aristotle should be revised, as recent evidence shows that this was one of the last works St. Thomas produced.

J. H. CREHAN

## SHORTER NOTICES

*The Little Flowers of St. Francis of Assisi*, in the first English translation, revised and emended by Dom Roger Hudleston, with an introduction by Paulinus Lavery, O.F.M. (Burns and Oates 12s 6d).

*The Revelations of Mechthild of Magdeburg* (1210-1297). Translated by Lucy Menzies (Longmans 18s).

*Little Book of Eternal Wisdom* and *Little Book of Truth*, by Henry Suso. Translated with introduction and notes by J. M. Clark (Faber and Faber 18s).

**T**H E FIRST ENGLISH TRANSLATION of the *Fioretti* was made by three collaborators in 1864 and was based on the edition of Fr. A. Cesari (1822), but was in many ways emended, harmonized, and here and there amplified, by the late Dom Roger Hudleston. The charm of these stories is imperishable: being unique, they cannot but express a definite tradition and spirit, i.e., that of St. Francis himself,

save, as is pointed out, chapters 4 and 38, which are hostile to Brother Elias, as St. Anthony of Padua became though St. Francis never did. We hold, then, that these chapters are definitely "historical," though they contain several different kinds of history.

Mechthild of Magdeburg's "Flowing Light of the Godhead" is translated for the first time from the only complete codex, at Einsiedeln, and Miss Menzies, who is of the school of Miss Evelyn Underhill, has done a good work in making the book known. Even so, cost of printing has regrettably caused her to omit not a few chapters. But in any case, Mechthild wrote (on loose sheets) in a "barbara lingua" which was Latinized by her Dominican friend Heinrich von Halle, who in his turn was translated in 1344 into the High German then spoken on the Upper Rhine. Hence we are far from the original and can never reach it. Still, the book provides a personal impression, rather as Blessed Angela of Foligno's dictated work does, though she told her unhappy secretary that "it wasn't in the least like that," in spite of the fact that he "took her down" *verbatim*. So, too, we have the doctrine of St. Catherine of Genoa transmitted by others, and we almost always find, in the case of the greater mystics, that albeit the "form" may be due to someone else, the essential message is unmistakably authentic. As for the substance of the book, we have always thought that it already marks the beginning of a decline from the classical period of German mysticism, that of Hildegard of Bingen and Elizabeth of Schönau: but the study of any of these demands a close examination of the kind of imagery they used, and so, a work alike for the historian and the psychologist; and since we have nothing to compare with the *Etudes Carmélitaines* (which perhaps are becoming—naturally—particularly occupied with St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross and their descendants, and also, medical in the wide sense), we may hope that English Catholic periodicals, THE MONTH undoubtedy included, may proceed to investigate this intricate material. For Fr. Thurston would never have dreamt that such investigation should stop where his did.

Professor Clark is professor of German in the University of Glasgow, and his book is one of the "Classics of the Contemplative Life," whose general editor was Professor E. Allison Peers. These names, and these facts, should make us amazed at the distance British scholarship and intelligence have travelled since recent materialist days. It is probable that the *Little Book of Truth* has never yet been translated into English. In a sense, no wonder. "The mystics spoke in German and thought in Latin. One word had to do duty for half a dozen meanings." (Think of *Logos!* of *Pleroma!*) At least it is becoming clear that whether or no all that Suso (to say nothing of Eckhart) always said was exactly what St. Thomas said, or what the later Scholastics would

have said—and at times it certainly was not—we are now uncontroversially helped to reach what he thought and meant, and it was not “unorthodox,” still less, pantheist. Professor Clark, and all this Series, are doing a great service to historians and theologians alike.

*Saints and Ourselves*, Personal Studies by twelve authors. Edited by Philip Caraman, S.J. (Hollis and Carter 10s 6d).  
*Saints Alive*, by Arnold L. Haskell (Wingate 10s 6d).

HERE IS A RISING TIDE of Catholic literature about the saints, and no more *genre vie-de-saint*. The saints are now put in their historical setting; their limitations, oddities, and even faults (for can we suppose a saint was perfect while still growing?) are not shirked. These essays are reverent and frank, modest and courageous, and written by men and women whose style matches the distinction of their minds. Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith reveals to us St. Dominic, too little known outside his Order: the Albigenses were more horrible but hardly more dangerous than the groups of “Poor Men” into whose aberrations St. Francis’s humility and obedience saved him from being drawn—Mr. Douglas Hyde might have made more of that: but how portray the Seraphic Saint fully in but a few pages? Miss Antonia White unveils the charm as well as the magnificence of Aquinas. Robert Speaight has the courage to make a vivid profile, as they say, of that other colossus, St. Augustine: Rosalind Murray gets very deep into the soul of St. John of the Cross, and T. S. Gregory shows how St. Francis de Sales found a wonderful response to his two Treatises, as witty as grave, in that century so wicked yet so a-flower with holiness. Harman Grisewood and Edward Sackville-West introduce us to two little-known figures, St. Gregory of Tours and the “other” Mary of the Incarnation, not *la belle Mme Acarie!* Both these essays, sympathetic and subtle, make us long that the Church’s history, tempestuous and strange, were more richly taught in our schools. Even what we know well, St. Thomas More and the Saint of Lisieux, have new light thrown on them by Sir Henry Slesser and J. B. Morton; and nearly the whole span of our history is embraced by Evelyn Waugh’s brilliant sketch of St. Helena and Dr. E. B. Strauss’s keen study of the moral problem set by St. Maria Goretti, killed just over fifty years ago. So competent yet so varied are these chapters that we may feel, as we finish each, that “*This is what I like the best!*”

We have left but little space for Mr. Haskell’s book, which is meant primarily for the young. When we read that he enjoys “world fame as an authority on the Ballet” (to say nothing of the fine arts and travel!) we feel sure that his pages will not be out of the stock-pot.

Nor are they. He too writes of St. Thomas More and of Ste. Thérèse; but also of St. Joan of Arc and the problem of War; of the Curé d'Ars and St. Anthony; and at some length about St. Bernadette. We are glad he makes use of B. G. Sandhurst, whose *We Saw Her* ought to be well known. This book, too, is gay and frank, and never artificial, nor does he think he must write slang: he was inspired, he tells us, by a "series of informal discussion classes with a group of pupils" ages thirteen to eighteen. He had hard work to keep up with their interest and questions. Miss Barbara Ward writes a cogent foreword; and the author's own Note and Introduction are not the least valuable part of an excellent book. Upshot, it is the saints, not systems, who alter the world: and, they are still alive and can be utilized!

*The Laughing Hyena and Other Poems*, by D. J. Enright (Routledge 8s 6d).

READERS OF THE MONTH will know Mr. Enright for a shrewd and able critic of verse, and in *The Laughing Hyena* they have the first fruits of his own practice in the art now made available in this country.

For a poet of thirty-three years old, the crop—though light in yield—is mature. There is nothing cloying about this haul; and if the sweet-toothed may be disappointed, others will appreciate the clean astringent taste. The tone of much of this poetry is that of a more sympathetic Auden: an Auden with the sharpness preserved but with the slickness and glibness omitted. Now and again, however, the influence of that uneven master of the pert makes itself felt, as when he writes in his poem *Coriolanus*:

And as he killed to please his mother, so  
that very reason fits his silly death.

Mr. Enright is not given to making free with words; but sometimes, as in *The Image*, he dares the resonant weighted line: "a forest fire against a forest's darkness."

Stylistically, Mr. Enright's chief talent seems to be for a fine use of internal rhyme and assonance, somewhat similar to David Gascoyne's employment of it in such poems as *The Post-War Night* and *Evening Again* (in his book *A Vagrant*) or the late Charles Williams's application of it in his play *The Seed of Adam*. But in *The Sky at Birmingham*, *Swan Village*, and *Autumn Sunday in Birmingham*, Mr. Enright handles this device in a more sustained and systematic manner than do the other two poets.

The main subject-matter of *The Laughing Hyena* is the poet's impressions of the English Midlands and the Middle East.

*Locke's Travels in France, 1675-79*, as related in his Journals, correspondence and other papers. Edited with introduction and notes by John Lough (Cambridge University Press 40s).

**O**F THE ADMIRABLE INDUSTRY AND ERUDITION of the Editor, and of the generous co-operation he received from librarians and others alike in England and in France, there can be no doubt. We must trust him, too, when he says that "fragmentary as the Journal is, and however tantalizing the gaps, it remains by far the fullest and most reliable account of seventeenth-century France left behind by an English traveller." It remains that the introduction is almost as illuminative for the general reader as the Journal itself. Locke was, it is true, "a careful and shrewd observer" and "strove to arrive at the truth." But how often he notes down some fact or other, and makes no comment on it: or even describes some natural scenery or phenomenon, like the Fountain of Vaucluse, without enabling the reader in any way to visualize it! He has plenty to say about Versailles and gives long accounts of its water-works but without making us even guess what the gardens of the palace looked like when those sheaves of water played—nor even how Louis XIV impressed him—save maybe by reason of his recollectiveness at his morning prayers. Here and there a flash of caustic humour strikes us—in the Charterhouse of "Ville Neuf" "there stands a plain old chair wherein (Pope Innocent VI) was infallible. I sat too little a while in it to get that priviledg (*sic*)."  
We hardly expect Locke to see Catholic affairs otherwise than from the outside; but even he might have been aware of the mystical importance of St. John of the Cross at celebrations in honour of whose beatification he was present. We cannot but admire the width of Locke's interests, but almost more, the richness of Professor Lough's notes, without which so much of the text would be unintelligible.

*The Scale of Perfection*, by Walter Hilton. Translation, notes, and introduction by Dom G. Sitwell, O.S.B. (Burns and Oates 18s).

**D**OM GERARD has done good service by re-publishing Hilton's book. Though agreeing that a critical edition does not yet exist, we may doubt if it will make any substantial difference. The book is of special interest as belonging to the transition period when rules for meditation had not been formulated, though the trend towards Spiritual Exercises can be observed. Yet Hilton aims, for his readers, at no inferior form of mysticism. Along with his ideals are a real shrewdness and also gentleness in sympathizing with weaker souls who cannot achieve what he seems to urge.

*Canterbury Cathedral*, by Hugh Ross Williamson; illustrated with photographs by A. W. Kerr (Country Life Ltd. 12s 6d).

THIS VOLUME ON CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL takes a merited place among modern monographs on this popular subject. It tells us little that is new, but it presents the Cathedral in an intelligible light to the would-be sight-seer, and gives him an excellent general idea of the grandeur and significance of the unique building.

The author exposes his theme with admirable compactness which, even if it tends to be a little indigestible, is on the whole extremely accurate. There is nothing to offend religious convictions, although some readers might not altogether like the statement on p. 46 that it was precisely the Spanish Marriage of Henry VIII that caused his breach with Rome.

A notable feature of the book is the series of original and excellent photographs by A. W. Kerr which bring out the architectural beauties of the Cathedral in a way never hitherto achieved. This novelty and distinction is, however, what we have long associated with the pictorial productions of *Country Life*.

Although there are remarkably few errors of any kind to be found, in the description of Plate 48 on page 49 the buildings are referred to as the "monks' library." This was actually a modern building, and is usually referred to as the "Library."

*Cover of Darkness*, by Air Commodore Chisholm, C.B.E., D.S.O., D.F.C., with a Foreword by Air Chief Marshal Sir William Elliot, K.C.B., K.B.E., D.F.C. (Chatto and Windus 12s. 6d).

THIS IS A BOOK ABOUT NIGHT-FLYING, by an airman and, very largely, for airmen. Much, therefore, is too technical for the ordinary reader to understand. But (apart from the photographs, many of which are beautiful) much, too, is intensely interesting and almost a case-book of the airman's psychology. Chapter 8, "Spekie," is especially valuable from this point of view. One learns of this young man's "superhuman courage and tenacity" that were needed if he were to learn to fly at all; of his extreme unselfishness and readiness to help; of his detachment from life which made him completely happy when the time came to die. It is hard to appreciate the necessary combination of intricate instruction with (as a rule) no general intelligence, of delicate sensitivity with a kind of unfeelingness, which were to be demanded of such men. Alas, it is hard to see how so paradoxical a character-formation could be created and maintained otherwise than by war. The book can but end on a note of disillusionment. "My new Europe was still-born." The author began his career, as here related, in Persia, concerned with oil; and to Persia, in 1946, he returned.

*Geschichte der Philosophie. II Teil: Neuzeit und Gegenwart*, by Johannes Hirschberger (Freiburg, Herder DM 29.50).

DR. HIRSCHBERGER is to be congratulated on having completed his history of philosophy with the publication of this second volume. Because of its orderly arrangement, conciseness and clarity, it is admirably suited for use as a text-book. Special attention is, of course, paid to German philosophy. Thus some eighty pages are devoted to Kant. Nietzsche is allotted some twenty-four pages. This may be unusual in a general history of philosophy; but in view of Nietzsche's cultural importance it is not an excessive allotment of space. The phenomenology of Husserl and Sartre is considered, and the philosophy of the late Professor N. Hartmann. Existentialism, German and French, is also discussed. Neopositivism is treated very briefly, more briefly than an English reader would probably wish; and Spanish thinkers like Unamuno and Ortega y Gasset do not appear. But the author carries the history of philosophy considerably nearer the present day than is customary in works of this kind, and this greatly enhances the practical value of the book. It should be added that there are sections not only on Renaissance Scholasticism but also on modern Scholasticism. Mention is made of living Catholic thinkers like Dempf and Guardini; and several pages are devoted to the philosophy of Blondel.

*Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, I, 1. Quinti Septimi Florentis Tertulliani Opera Catholica* (Brepols Ltd., Turnhout, Belgium 80 Belgian francs).

THIS, THE FIRST OF A NEW SERIES of editions of Patristic literature, contains the *Ad Martyras* and the *Ad Nationes* of Tertullian. An extremely comprehensive bibliography is reinforced by a *Stemma Codicum Collectionis Cluniacensis*, three tables of *testimonia* to the writings of Tertullian by other authors, and a further table of codices and principal editions. The printing and general appearance of the book are attractive, and make its use a pleasure to the reader—a quality all too often lacking in works of scholarship. Since accuracy is, perhaps, the keynote of the work, it is the more regrettable that, on page vii, line 36 should have been displaced to follow line 31. But this is a minor blemish in an otherwise admirable piece of workmanship.

The new series should be a worthy successor to Migne and the C.S.E.L., and its next publication will be awaited with pleasurable anticipation.

ONE of the great occupational risks of business life under the pressure of to-day is that the practical man of affairs neglects his outside reading, and all too easily falls into a narrow circle of immediate preoccupations. There is always loss in this, and the Catholic business or professional man, as a member of the Church Universal, has a particularly strong reason for keeping his mind open to wider horizons. Certainly it was never more necessary than now to follow world happenings. A direct chain of causes and effects ties every business to economical changes in the world, which are themselves as often the consequence as the cause of changes in men's political and social ideas. These ideas in their turn come out of the religions, or irreligions, of contemporary man.

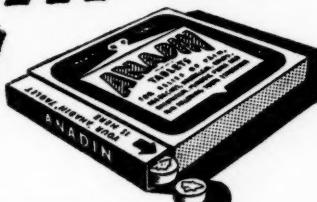
In many countries the Catholic Church is at the heart of the battle of ideas. Cardinal Manning's saying that "all great quarrels between men are at bottom theological" suggests that there is, in fact, no better starting-point or background for understanding the modern world than a Catholic one. Because of this approach and background,

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